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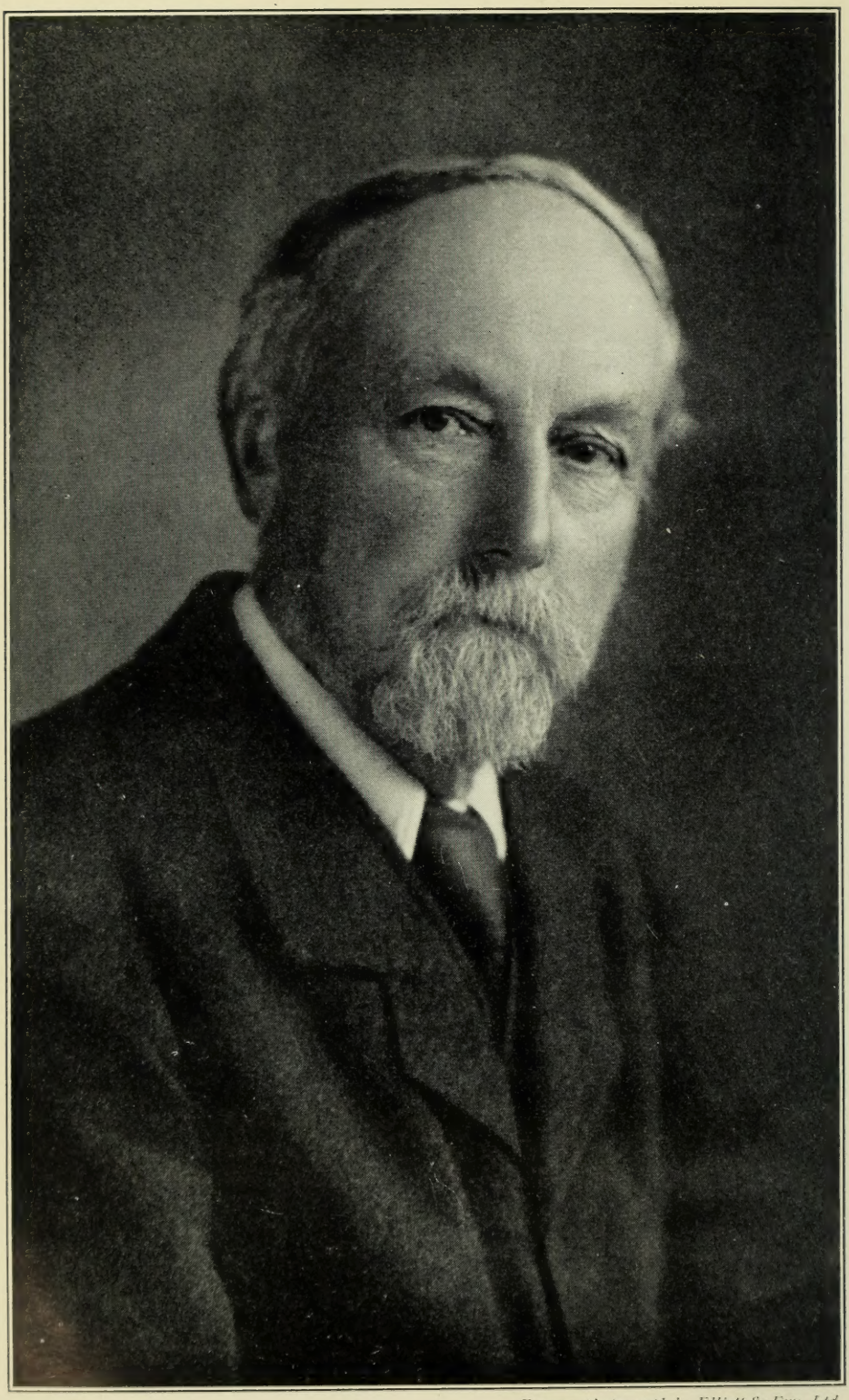

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HENRY S. SALT

MEMORIES OF BYGONE ETON

By

HENRY S. SALT

AUTHOR OF "SEVENTY YEARS AMONG SAVAGES"

WITH FRONTISPIECE
AND SIXTEEN OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS

HUTCHINSON & CO. (Publishers) LTD.
34–36 Paternoster Row, London, E.C. 4

Printed in Great Britain at
The Mayflower Press, Plymouth. William Brendon & Son, Ltd.

PREFACE

FACED with the familiar *Esto Perpetua*, I had felt some doubt as to the fitness of such a title as "Bygone Eton"; for that which aspires to be perpetual can hardly consent to be of the past. But when, some four years ago, I chanced to read in a newspaper that two retiring Eton Masters had assured an interviewer that though in the old days "boys sometimes cared for athletics, and did not care for work," it is quite different now, for they do their best splendidly, and the failure to work is only their playful pretence, I felt that I should be amply justified in speaking of the Eton of my own recollections as "bygone."

The period dealt with in the following chapters is roughly 1866–1885, but it has not been strictly adhered to; nor, as this is not an autobiography, have I always kept a distinction between the years which I spent at Eton as a King's Scholar and my later experience as an Assistant Master, but have drawn freely from either time for anecdotes or reflections. I have avoided, where possible, any repetition of stories that have already been told in some of the many books about Eton, except in the case of my own *Eton under Hornby*, from

which, as it has long been out of print, I have here and there incorporated a few paragraphs and anecdotes. As I am now, with one exception, the oldest survivor from Dr. Hornby's staff, I hope my garrulity may be pardoned.

For permission to reprint certain articles as chapters in this book I am indebted to the courtesy of Messrs. Macmillan and Co. Ltd., and of the editors of the *Observer*, the *Daily News*, and the *Literary Guide*.

H. S. S.

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MEMORIES OF BYGONE ETON

I

"THE HEAD"

WHAT majesty, in the mind of a public school boy, is associated with the word "Headmaster"! It is like "the divinity that doth hedge a king"; and being implanted at an age when such impressions are most vivid, does not fade away as other early emotions do. I shall never forget the feelings with which I first viewed Dr. Balston, when I entered Eton as a King's Scholar in 1866. It was not that Headmasters were a novelty to me; on the contrary, having lived both at Shrewsbury and at Rugby, I had heard and seen a good deal of them. My father, who was educated at Shrewsbury School, had enjoyed the distinction of being the last boy flogged by Dr. Butler; of the great Dr. Kennedy, whose Latin Grammar was long a household word, I had a more pleasant personal recollection, for it was in private life, and in his most genial mood, that I saw him. At Rugby,

where I was at a preparatory school, I had gazed from afar on Dr. Temple with awe and admiration. And yet again at Blackheath Proprietary School, I had listened spellbound to the eloquence of Dr. Selwyn,[1] when, in addressing the school on the subject of a fight that had taken place between two of the boys, he informed us that it "savoured of the brutality of the public ring." I was already an interested observer of Headmasters, and of the dignity and grandeur that belong to them.

But in Dr. Balston all my previous conceptions of greatness were surpassed. He was, in fact, regarded (and, from the Etonian standpoint, not without reason) as the ideal "Head." He looked it, beyond doubt; for seen by us in cap and gown and we rarely saw him without them—it was rumoured that he slept in them—he was a majestic figure, tall, handsome, grave, with an austerity that made us fear him, yet concealed a very real kindness of heart. He was the personification of a rigid performance of duties, and never swerved in any instance from the fulfilment of a traditional routine which involved much that might well have been considered a waste of time and labour.

For example, it was the custom for the Headmaster to send periodically for each Division, and then to read aloud, with appreciative comments, the copies of Latin Verses which had won for their

[1] The father of my friend Dr. E. C. Selwyn, who was headmaster of Uppingham School at a later date.

authors the honour of being "Sent up for Good." No more tedious or useless ceremony could have been devised; for the writing of Latin Verse by ordinary boys was already seen to be an absurdity, whatever charm it might still possess for the very few who had the poetic gift, and the honour was often bestowed as a reward for general diligence, rather than for any particular merit in verses. Yet the solemn reading of those patchwork exercises, a jumble of odds and ends culled from the *Gradus ad Parnassum*, or "cribbed" from obliging friends, was an old Eton institution, and as such was sacred in Dr. Balston's eyes. I well remember an occasion when, standing awe-stricken beside his table in his Sixth Form school-room, I heard him read one of my own compositions, at the end of which he graciously dismissed me with his "very good, very good, very good." For he had a curious habit of rapidly repeating his words, which, had his presence been less stately, might almost have been called a stammer. It was said—so majestic was he—that when he had been speaking to a famous athlete named Tinné, a young man—boy he could hardly be called—of Herculean proportions and of corresponding self-importance, he was overheard to give him the parting injunction, "Run away, run away, run away, Tinné," as if bidding an infant toddle off to its hoop or marbles.

He was not, as I afterwards learnt, a man of keen intellect, ambition, or wide sympathies;

and the boys did not know that he had only accepted the headmastership from a sense of duty to the school, when it was pressed on him in order to bridge over an interval during which no suitable candidate was forthcoming, and perhaps in the hope of staving off for a time the reforms that were threatened from elsewhere. No Roman hero could have kept the bridge more faithfully. Dr. Balston was, in fact, the last representative of the old Eton autocracy, which was superseded by the appointment of a Governing Body elected from outside, and at the time of which I speak was already reduced to the mere shadow of its former power and prestige. Reform was known to be coming, but had not yet arrived ; and in the short breathing-space that was left it was presumably some comfort to the veterans of the ancient order that one of their own way of thinking should still occupy the throne. The Provost and Fellows thus formed a sort of House of Lords behind the headmaster ; and in their stolid opposition to changes of any kind no more stalwart body could have been desired.

Dr. Goodford, the Provost, had been, personally, a capable and energetic Headmaster ; but his views and general attitude towards the questions that arise in a public school were of a very antiquated character ; and the same might without hesitation have been said of the little band of retired masters who formed his bodyguard. It was by their sermons in the College

chapel that we boys chiefly knew them, and knew them to our cost; for there it mattered little whether the pulpit were occupied by the Provost himself, or by the Rev. John Wilder, or by Bishop Chapman, or by some other Fellow—we knew what we had to expect when once the homily was begun: rarely can piety and dullness have been so evenly matched. In their fidelity to the old dispensation, while they could not but be aware of the close approach of the new, I have sometimes thought that those venerable survivors were like the Titans in Keats's "Hyperion," when, as the poet depicts them, loyal to their chief Saturn, dispossessed of his kingdom by Jupiter, they

"Groan'd for the old allegiance once more."

Dr. Balston certainly played his part well, and kept up the external show of discipline with a dignity which many Headmasters might have envied. It was the end of an epoch; and the curtain could not have been rung down on a more stately and imposing figure.

I sometimes wonder whether the majesty of the Eton headmastership has waned at all in our less formal modern days. Dr. Balston, as I have said, was quite unbending in his dignity; his successor, Dr. Hornby, in his rarer public appearances, was also a great figure, and Dr. Warre did not allow the tradition to suffer in his keeping. Dr. Lyttelton, who succeeded Warre, had personally no reason to fear comparison with any of

his forerunners; but having a far more open mind, and being more alive, in the intellectual sense, he could not restrict and starve his sympathies as they did; in a word, he was much more human. Delightful stories are told of him; how, when taking a walk with members of his staff, he would go in jacket and cricket cap, instead of the solemn official garb, and perhaps coming to the railings of a park, where all was "strictly private," would lightly vault over and do a bit of trespassing. And now the present "Head," Dr. Alington, has taken to writing chatty articles for a London evening paper, and is said to cherish an ambition to become a second W. S. Gilbert in the realms of comic opera and light verse.

Shade of Dr. Balston! Such doings in the good old days would have caused Thames to run backward and the Etonian heavens to fall. We may well ask, What next? Will some headmaster of Eton consent to be filmed? or will "listeners-in" be privileged to hear him giving a grave address to the school, sandwiched in between the bits of band-music, jigs, comic songs, and other popular "turns," which form part of such entertainments, not to mention the occasional meaningless noises, the mysterious creakings and squeakings, which, as their origin is not scientifically accounted for, are supposed by some persons to be interjected from another planet?

But I will not speculate on such possibilities: I

prefer to throw back my thoughts across the gulf of sixty years until they rest again on Dr. Balston, as I still see him in memory, the ideal chief, the pattern of an Eton Headmaster—in a word, "The Head."

II

HORNBY THE HERMIT

WHEN Dr. Balston retired, in 1868, it was generally expected that the Rev. Edmond Warre, then an assistant master, would succeed him; but the choice fell upon Dr. Hornby, an Old Etonian, then an Oxford don, who came with the reputation of being a reformer. A few reforms, as in the teaching of mathematics, and some modern studies, he did introduce; but he soon seemed to tire of so arduous a rôle in a place where all changes were looked on with suspicion, and thus he presently settled down to an inert and colourless regime, during which the tone and discipline of the school were perceptibly lowered. Far superior to Dr. Balston in intellect and grace of manner, possessed of much sensibility and humour, he was conspicuously lacking in industry and will-power, two qualities which are essential to a successful discharge of a Headmaster's duties. It was not that he was deficient in ability. Some functions that he could not avoid were excellently discharged by him, but he avoided those that he could; he was seldom seen by the mass of the boys except in Chapel or at "Absence," and lived, as far as it

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DR. J. J. HORNBY

was possible to do so, in a dignified retirement. This, it will readily be understood, did not conduce to good order in the school, and during his tenure of the headmastership there were a number of unseemly incidents, of which the worst was the attempt made by a riotous mob to throw an unpopular assistant master, the notorious "Stiggins," over the bridge at Barnes Pool.

There has been a marked reluctance among Etonian chroniclers to tell the full truth about Dr. Hornby's failings; a reticence due in large measure to the charming manners and unfailing courtesy with which he disarmed criticism.[1] It was sometimes very entertaining at the masters' meetings, which were held once or twice in the school-time, to watch the efforts made by Warre, still an assistant, to brace Hornby to some activity. "Will you not make a rule, sir," he would ask, "and pull us up if we don't keep it?" But these appeals never had any lasting effect. I was told by the Rev. J. L. Joynes, in whom, as Lower Master of Eton, Dr. Hornby used to confide, that the Headmaster only acquiesced in the holding of the meetings in order that the more zealous of his assistants might there "blow off steam." *That* they certainly did, with much energy, and with little effect.

[1] But for an exception to this reticence see Dr. E. Lyttelton's *Memories and Hopes*, pp. 39–41. "The attempts made by a few progressives on the staff to goad Hornby into further activities of administration were resisted with a courteous immobility to which educational history affords no parallel."

Yet lax as he was himself, Hornby was a great believer in the most useless forms of punishment. When I became a master at Eton, and had to take a division of Lower boys, the only advice I received from him was to "have them whipped often." He himself used frequently to set a "Georgic," the writing of some five or six hundred lines of Virgil, the most idiotic waste of a boy's time that has ever been devised by schoolmasters; in which he stood in marked contrast to his successor, Dr. Warre, who once wisely rebuked an assistant master who had avowed that he was looking out for an opportunity to set some troublesome youth a Georgic: "You should look out *not* to set him a Georgic." Mr. Hugh Macnaghten in his pleasant book, *Fifty Years of Eton*, has expressed his thankfulness that Dr. Hornby set him three Georgics during his last year in the school. From what dark pitfalls Mr. Macnaghten was saved by those beneficent impositions he unfortunately does not explain.

In our time it did not much matter *how* the lines were written, provided that they offered a general resemblance to what they professed to be. They had to be "shown up," at the headmaster's house, where they were received by his manservant, a lively fellow whose impudence sometimes got him into trouble. On one occasion he looked up at Lord Clifton, an extremely tall youth, and asked: "Is it cold up there?" for which remark Clifton reported him to Dr. Hornby.

Eton boys, if we may judge from early histories, have always been allowed a rather generous amount of liberty. That was well enough; but under Dr. Hornby's sluggish rule, as I have said, there was a serious decay of discipline, and this to an extent which caused much uneasiness to many of the assistant masters, though not, it seemed, to the Headmaster himself, who continued to live, as far as might be, the life of a cultured and cheerful recluse. It is no exaggeration to say that he was rarely seen in Eton.

When I was a junior master there was a boy in my division of so friendly and communicative a nature that he would sometimes wait after school to give me any piece of news that he thought would be of interest. Thus he once stayed, in buoyant spirits, to inform me that a soldier had been drowned that morning at Windsor; on another occasion he brought me, in a state of some excitement, the surprising intelligence that he had "seen the Headmaster going down Keate's Lane," that is, through one of the main thoroughfares of Eton! Whether this rarity of appearance conduced to Dr. Hornby's personal prestige among the boys, I need not say; but it certainly made more difficult the task of his assistants, nor were his own "school orders" obeyed as a real ruler would have insisted on.

For instance, boys were strictly forbidden to cross the river to attend the Windsor Races. I remember Hornby himself coming, one half-holiday,

to the masters' recreation ground—and greatly surprised we were by the sight of him—to tell us that they were going over "in shoals." That was the amount of attention that his commands received. Nor was it the Windsor Races only that attracted the boys: Ascot, even Epsom, was sometimes the goal of their ambition.

But how, it may be asked, could they escape detection? The danger was less than it seemed, because the calling of "Absence" in School Yard on a half-holiday afternoon was the special duty of the Headmaster; and it was quite possible, when *his* eye was upon you, to get a schoolfellow to hold up a hat and cry "Here, sir!" on your behalf. He knew few of the boys by sight, and was not very likely to detect such fraud. If it had been Mr. —— who called "Absence," the case would have been very different.

I remember how, as a Sixth Form boy, it struck me and my schoolfellows, that the pregnant phrase applied by Tacitus to a Roman Emperor was peculiarly applicable to our Headmaster: "Capax imperii nisi imperasset." Four words in the Latin, four lines in the English; if an attempt be made to express our feelings in an epigram:

> "He came, the wonder of the school:
> But soon, our fervour cooling,
> We summed him up as 'Born to rule,
> Unless we'd seen him ruling.'"

When the Headmaster was thus lightly esteemed, it was less surprising that his assistants should at

times be treated with scant respect, except the few who had established a formidable reputation, and in any case it was quite useless to look to Hornby for effective assistance. When I had the little old boarding-house, once famous as "Drury's," a window was once smashed on a winter evening by a boy returning from pupil-room to his "Dame's," and as it was done with evident deliberation I thought it my duty to see Dr. Hornby and tell him what had happened. I had then been an assistant master at Eton for quite eight years; but I noticed a considerable hesitation and embarrassment on the Headmaster's part in discussing the affair, and found that it was caused by his not knowing which boarding-house I occupied, an ignorance which he felt rather shy of openly confessing.

Such rowdyism was not unusual on certain festive dates, such as Election Saturday or the Fourth of June, when wine flowed rather too freely. It was on an Election Saturday, I think, that a most unpopular master, the Rev. C. C. James, known to generations of boys as "Stiggins," was, as I have already mentioned, nearly thrown into the water; an incident which was referred to in the *Adventurer*, the school magazine, as "the scene, fresh in the memory of us all, when a howling mob brutally attacked and insulted the masters." This, written by one of the boys, shows that it was not the masters only who deplored the state of lawlessness into which the school had fallen.

Hornby's sole prescription for restoring order was to flog, and he did even that with the listlessness and apathy which characterized him. On more than one occasion he flogged "the wrong boy." Happening to know the victim of one of these errors, I asked him why he had not explained matters to the Headmaster; and his answer was, that though he was not aware of any master having "complained" of him, he supposed a complaint *might* have been sent in, and therefore did not think it worth while to protest! Such, in the 'sixties and 'seventies, was the state of discipline at Eton.

There were several cases in which assistant masters were dismissed, or shall I say "deported"; and this was the less surprising because Dr. Hornby's appointments were often made very carelessly. One of his selections, that of an old Etonian with a jaw like that of the traditional "bruiser," was said to have been made at a chance meeting in a London street. "What are you doing now?" said Hornby. "Nothing," said the bruiser. "Then why not join my staff?" Which he did; with the result that his tenure of office had to be prematurely cancelled. Naturally, under a Headmaster who showed so little interest in his business, the standard of teaching at Eton was deplorably low.[1]

Dr. Hornby's quarrel with Mr. Oscar Browning

[1] "It was as bad as it could be," wrote Lord Coleridge, another of my contemporaries, in his *This for Remembrance*.

has been the subject of much comment. From some letters which I received from "O. B." as late as 1920 and 1921, I learnt that while his indignation at Hornby's action was in no way softened by lapse of time, he attributed his dismissal largely to the influence of Warre. "*He* engineered the business, and kept Hornby up to the mark." I do not know to what extent this was true; but Warre and Browning certainly represented two antagonistic parties at Eton, the athletic and the intellectual, and whereas Hornby in the early years of his headmastership was much in Browning's company, he afterwards veered strongly to the opposite camp. He was a pleasant but weak and obstinate man; and the pity is that as Warre was destined to be eventually the ruler, he did not directly succeed Balston in 1868, in in which case the school would have been spared some sixteen listless years.

Dr. Warre's appointment to the headmastership may be regarded as closing that period of "bygone Eton" which is the subject of this book, and the story of his subsequent achievements and great success in his post has been fully told in the biography published by Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher in 1922. My friend and colleague J. D. Bourchier once described him to me as "a coarse-grained man." He was so; but he was also in his own rough way very kindly and good-natured, and deservedly won the respect of all who worked with or under him by his loyal

devotion to Eton, and the untiring zeal with which he strove for what he regarded as her true interest and welfare. In his careful observance of duties he was almost like Balston, but with a far wider and more restless range of ideas and ambitions, as in his passion for building, to which I shall have occasion to refer in a later chapter. He had the knack, too, possessed by all successful organizers, of making others work for him, in illustration of which fact the following story is worth telling.

One of the assistant masters had a butler who had formerly been in Warre's service; and this man, when he had overheard some talk about the amazing activities of the Headmaster, once said to his employer: "Good Lord, sir! Why, *you* work ever so much harder than Dr. Warre does." Thus it often is, no doubt, that phenomenal reputations for industry are built up. But Dr. Warre's fame as a great Headmaster (taking for granted the Etonian view of greatness) was certainly well earned; and his energies seemed the more spectacular because of the contrast which he presented to his amiable and easygoing predecessor, Hornby the Hermit.

III

SOME SMALL FRY

I WAS lately walking with a friend along a "front" on the south coast, when there passed us a quaint-looking old gentleman whom we recognized, to our surprise, as a former schoolfellow at Eton, known to us, more than fifty years before, as somewhat of a "queer fish." It is possible that if he, on his part, had been aware of us, we might have wakened in him a similar recollection. Anyhow, the meeting, strange and unexpected as it was, set me pondering on those unforgotten old times, and especially on certain Eton personages who in the 'sixties and 'seventies had borne a well-earned reputation for oddity.

It has often been observed that in a public meeting there is a spirit which exceeds and transcends the several abilities of the persons there assembled, a sort of general and contagious intelligence, with a readier wit and more spontaneous perception than is possessed by most individuals.[1] The same is true of a great public school; for though the boys, taken separately,

[1] Queen Victoria is said to have complained that Mr. Gladstone used to speak to her "as if she were a public meeting." If so, did he not pay her a high compliment?

are seldom found to show a keen sense of humour, they seem collectively to have that gift in rather a remarkable degree; whence it results that in almost every school there springs up, in each generation, a number of entertaining anecdotes which furnish vivid if rather crude and juvenile memories for later years.

Of Eton masters who were thus distinguished there will be something to say in a following chapter: I will now deal with some small folk of the shallows before proceeding to the denizens of the deep; for there were minnows as well as Tritons in our fishponds, and we were ready to acclaim the cheering quality of queerness in whatever form it might display itself. A few instances will suffice to show what zest we had for the sport.

It was the system in College that breakfast and tea were taken by the boys in their own studies, and, as far as the small size of the rooms allowed, it was permissible for several friends to mess together. This, where the company was congenial, was an arrangement in every way delightful, securing for us, as it did, a meeting with kindred spirits twice a day for a period perhaps of several years, and lasting in some cases (it was so in my own) till death did us part, that is, till we ourselves were numbered with those who had departed from Eton. The joys of this companionship were manifold; it was a family, a party, a club, and a debating society all in one.

I was extremely fortunate in my messmates; we were four in number, and all close personal chums. Two of the party were brothers, and it is especially of these two that I would speak, for they were somewhat famous in the school, and popularly known, from their diversity of complexions, as "the Black 'Un" and "the White 'Un." But though so widely differing in appearance, the one with jet-black hair, the other fair almost to whiteness, they were similar in temperament, both being of a charmingly naïve, easy-going, irresponsible disposition which, while it sometimes got them into trouble, endeared them the more to their friends.

The absent-mindedness of Fred, the "Black 'Un," the elder of the brothers, was very marked, and his queer doings and Malaprop sayings were a frequent joy; as when he told us, one evening, that in going up the High Street he had been suddenly attacked by a faintness which, curiously enough, came upon him just as he was passing the Christopher Hotel (a house that was strictly forbidden), so that he was able to procure a restorative ere it was too late. I once had the good luck to see him caught by Dr. Balston in the act of climbing some difficult and forbidden railings: he was perched insecurely at the top, when the Headmaster, a majestic gowned figure, came swiftly round the corner and commanded an immediate descent. "Come down," he said; "come down, come down, come down"; and down the poor

"Black 'Un" came, with greater speed than might have been supposed humanly possible.

Some of Fred's "bulls," too, became household words among his companions. Of these, his "What did Buffy say?" was perhaps the most admired. "Buffy" was the nickname of the Master in College,[1] who sat at the high table in the Hall and received daily the "bill," or slip of paper on which the names of absentees were entered. On one occasion he was not present; but the præpostor, whose duty it was to prepare the "bill," did not notice this, and to the amusement of the spectators walked up, "bill" in hand, to the unoccupied high table. It happened that Fred was "staying out" that day; and when we told him what had happened he laughed most heartily at the præpostor's mistake; then, after a thoughtful pause, he inquired with much eagerness: "What did Buffy say?"

On another occasion, when answering to his name at "Absence," instead of crying, "Here, sir," he loudly ejaculated "Keating," presumably because his eye was resting upon a boy of that name. Thus, too, one winter day, at the "final" football match for the House Cup, when a tremendous tussle was going on between Warre's and Evans's, the leading Houses of that time, our Fred was standing amid an excited crowd of spectators, himself as excited as any of them,

[1] Mr. H. E. Luxmoore. To us Collegers he was "Buffy," but see Chapter xx, pp. 165–167.

while stentorian cries of "Warre's!" "Evans's!" came alternately from the backers of the two rival teams. At last there was a lull in the tempest of shouting, and then there rang out one solitary voice, heard distinctly over the field, and tremulous with intense interest in the fortunes of the game—and what it cried was—"Durnford's!" Poor Fred had characteristically imported into the struggle the name of another House ("Judy" Durnford's, to wit) which did not happen to be concerned.

The "White 'Un," an athlete of some note, who won the school mile and the steeplechase, had almost as queer a mixture of simplicity and adventurousness. One of his feats was to ride a ram in the Playing Fields; another was to catch by hand a green woodpecker, which he assured me with great pride was "a tropical bird," and it was with some difficulty that he was persuaded to restore his captive to liberty. But the exploits of this *par nobile fratrum* would fill a volume. I had a great affection for both of them, and our friendship continued after we had left Eton; but now, alas! they are only a memory, for they both died comparatively young.

Prominent among other celebrities was a youth who bore the engaging name of "Satan"—not that he in any way lacked virtue, or popularity, or good looks, for he was in every sense a nice fellow, but merely because he had an unearthly demoniac expression, a weird side-glance from the corner of his eyes, which would have been worth

a fortune to a comedian. Inveterate pleasure-seekers that we were, we studied and enjoyed this Mephistophelian school-fellow in all his gestures and attitudes, and had critical discussions behind his back (for we would not wound his feelings) as to which of his aspects was the most ravishing. But here a decision was difficult; for as Keats expressed it, in his sonnet to a nymph "of the sidelong glance,"

> "But thou to please wert nurtured so completely
> That I can never tell what mood is best:
> I shall as soon pronounce which Grace more neatly
> Trips it before Apollo than the rest."

The verdict usually went in favour of our friend's posture at the wicket; for it was noticed that when he was preparing to bat, and had assumed what I believe cricketers now call the "one-eyed stance," the effect was very marked on the nerves of the bowler, who was at times so convulsed with inward laughter at the strangeness of the visage that peered round at him, that he could hardly deliver the ball. It was the batsman himself who had "queered the pitch."

This judgment, however, was strongly challenged by one of us who had happened in the holidays to see "Satan" fishing, and asserted that the *diablerie* of the looks with which he watched the float, when a bite was anticipated, surpassed anything in the cricket-field, and was, as he expressed it, "enough to make the fish laugh." So we left it at that.

Very different, but in his own way no less entertaining, was one whom I will call Tom ——, the champion scapegrace and ne'er-do-well of his time, a little cracked, no doubt, yet as pleasant and genial a fellow as one could meet. It was by the utter recklessness of his escapades that he amazed and charmed us; as when he took a puppy into Dr. Hornby's schoolroom, or, with a handkerchief held to his face, to indicate that his nose was bleeding, walked out of the school chapel before a spellbound congregation, to make off then and there to the forbidden race-course at Ascot.

He was famous, too, for his outrageous interjections at times when silence was strictly enjoined. Thus even in chapel, during the responses in the Psalms, when a too zealous visitor was heard proclaiming in strident tones from the stalls: "The voice of the Lord is a glorious voice," there came from Tom a hoarse comment: "More than yours is, old chap!"

Again on Founder's Day, at the banquet in the College Hall, when we stood in a line on either side as the Provost and his guests made their entry, there passed by us a dignitary whose stoop was so pronounced as to bend him nearly double. "Never mind, sir," was Tom's cheering remark. "You'll be all the nearer your food." It was a custom at the same festival for the wine-cup to be carried round, and then Tom was always to the fore; for though he had taken, in somewhat suspicious circumstances, a pledge of abstinence

from alcohol, he was not deterred from making a gallant fight for a deep draught from the chalice. In the Virgilian phrase :

> Ille impiger hausit
> Spumantem pateram, et pleno se proluit auro.[1]

I have a pleasant remembrance of how I once met him hurrying up Windsor Hill, as if on urgent business, and with what an ingenuous grin he told me, when I asked the cause of his haste, that at a Temperance Meeting, announced for that hour, a shilling was to be given to every convert who took the pledge.

A much more profitable method of replenishing his rapidly exhausted purse was discovered by him in his dealings with a devoted grandmother, who had unwisely offered to give him a sovereign whenever he brought home a prize. With prizes, as ordinarily gained, he had scant acquaintance ; but he found that at a comparatively small outlay he could purchase a cloth-bound book of sufficiently gaudy appearance to impose upon a credulous old lady, and thus pocket a handsome balance in every transaction of the sort. His prizes thenceforth were numerous enough to suggest the highest hopes as to his future. But *Dis aliter visum :* his career was destined to be a short one. He went out to one of the Colonies and died there at an early age. The last and very gratifying report we had of him, before the news of his death,

[1] " He, full lief,
In deep carouse the foaming beaker drained."

was that " he had stolen a horse and was doing well." I kept a tender place for him in my memory ; and when some fifty years later I met two sisters of his, and would fain have engaged them in talk about my old school-fellow's humours, I was rather pained to notice their decided desire to let the subject drop.

Nor was it only among our school-fellows that we sought and found such recreation. Another favourite of those days was a wan youth who went among us by the name of " Goosey." He was the son of one of the masters, not himself an Etonian, a thin phantom of a fellow who might have been an Astral[1] rather than a creature of flesh and blood. For some inscrutable reason he always assumed that it was raining, and held over his head a large umbrella—" Goosey's gingham " we called it—as he sallied forth daily, Bible under arm, to visit " the poor," which was reputed to be the only vocation of which he was capable. (What " the poor " thought of it was not recorded.) Schoolboys are not very considerate, and I fear we were as blind to the pathetic aspect of the picture which he presented as we were keenly alive to the comical. He amused us ; but we did feel some slight compunction when it was known that a big Eton boy, running tumultuously down the stairs of a boarding-house, and thence across

[1] I use a well-known Theosophical term. A friend has suggested " Wastrel," but Goosey was not that ; though possibly some Astrals are Wastrels as well.

the pavement, had collided with the unfortunate "Goosey" who happened to be passing the door, and had knocked him, umbrella and all, into the proverbial cocked-hat.

The Prayer for Rain has been read under strange circumstances before now, but never perhaps so strangely as at one of the Dame's boarding-houses at Eton. It was customary for the head boy to read Prayers, but one evening, in his absence, the duty devolved unexpectedly on another youth of very nervous disposition. The Prayer Book was handed to him—no time to protest or decline—and before he knew what he was doing, he had uttered the fatal "Let us pray." And he *did* pray, with a vengeance! Wildly turning over the leaves, he hurriedly seized on what he thought was a prayer. It was the Absolution; and a sensation went through the audience, as their school-fellow thus usurped the function of a priest and absolved them of their too numerous sins. Again the unhappy youth made a wild attempt; and this time he certainly secured a prayer, but one hardly suitable to the occasion or the weather. It was the Prayer for Rain; and as the supplication was uttered for "such moderate rain and showers" the sound of pelting rain-drops (it had been a very wet day) was heard on the skylight above. It was a case of praying after the event.

One of the pleasantest episodes in the life of an Eton boy used to be his occasional retirement, in perfect health, on the sick-list—or, in Etonian

OUR MESS

Sitting (from left to right): second "The White 'Un"; fourth "The Black 'Un." Fags standing behind.

See pp. 28–31

parlance, "staying out." To "stay out," for a few days, at some judiciously selected date, was a recognized expedient, when several masters were pressing, like duns, for arrears of work; and very amusing sometimes were the conversations that took place between the soi-disant invalid and the house-master or matron who was invited to sign his "excuse." "Friday Fever" was a well-known form of attack; but when a half-holiday, or, better still, a whole-holiday, was coming round, it was wonderful how suddenly the sick became strong again, and manfully professed his ability to go into school. Here, however, the matron would sometimes get her revenge by insisting that after so sharp an attack it really would not be safe for the sufferer to venture out of doors so soon. On the whole, I think there could not be a better description of an Eton boy "staying out," than Herman Melville's picture of one of his grotesque sea-captains: "I don't know exactly what's the matter with him; but he keeps close inside the house—a sort of sick, and yet he don't look so. In fact, he ain't sick; but no, he isn't well, either."

The invalids did not always keep close inside the house. There was an occasion when a youth whose state of health was supposed to be confining him to his room wagered with a fellow-invalid that with an air-gun, which he had secretly in possession, he would at the first shot bring down a rook in the Playing Fields. The two adjourned,

at some quiet hour, to the neighbourhood of the rookery, and took up a position under one of the great trees. Sighting a victim, the young sportsman fired, and to his joy there came tumbling through the branches a large bird, which proved to be—a wood-pigeon. He had shot at the crow and hit the pigeon—the reverse of the common adage. A fine point of casuistry was thus raised as to the winning of the wager; but it was, I think, awarded according to the letter of the compact, and against the rather unlucky wielder of the gun, on the broad ground that a wood-pigeon is not a rook.

But it is time to bring these anecdotes of small fry to a close, for in the shallow rapids of schoolboy life there is enough and more than enough of them. I will add but a word only, about "The Unkimmon." A housemaid she was, on whom we had bestowed that distinguished title from the day when, in an altercation with one of the boys, she had warned us, with deeply offended dignity, that she was "no kimmon servant." The zenith of her fame was reached when the discovery of a dead dormouse, squeezed flat beneath the mattress in one of the beds, had solved the mystery of a stench that had for some days excited comment and curiosity. "It don't surprise me," she said. "Whenever I made that bed, I 'eaved again."

IV

COMEDIANS IN CAP AND GOWN

WHY was it, in those bygone years, that Eton boys were so greatly entertained by the peculiarities of their pastors and masters, those *comicos stultos senes* as they regarded them ? Where they really more eccentric than the pedagogues of the present time ? Or must the teacher, in all ages, be a butt for the irreverence of the taught ? Certainly there were several Eton masters at that period (and doubtless it was the same at other schools) who were a lasting source of amusement to successive generations of boys. I call them comedians in cap and gown ; for indeed, when one looks back, it would seem that they were less masters than mimes, a troop of antics whose whimsicalities gave amusement under the guise of education.

A narrow alley entitled " Judy's Passage " still bears witness to the fame of the Rev. F. E. Durnford, Lower Master of Eton, who for many years was a conspicuous figure in the school under the familiar nickname of " Judy." If ever there were a queer fish in cap and gown it was he, with his puckered visage and weather-beaten aspect, like a sort of Ancient Mariner in academic garb. But it

was his voice that made him a cause of infinite merriment to us ; for it had the odd nasal twang which the Punch-and-Judy man affects in those dramatic dialogues of which children never tire ; and it was his misfortune that the more earnestly he appealed to his listeners, he excited in them the more irrepressible mirth. If Orpheus with his lute made trees and mountains bow themselves when he sang, not less surely did this old clergyman's voice cause us Collegers to rock with laughter.

I have occasion to remember it, because, as a Sixth Form boy, I was absent, on leave, one memorable evening when, as it happened, the place of the Headmaster, who usually read prayers, was taken at short notice by " Judy " ; and when I returned I found my school-fellows almost in a state of collapse. I had missed, I was told, such a scene as was never before witnessed ; for so overwhelming had been the effect of " Judy's " intonations that a sort of hysteria had seized his audience, and it was as if a tornado of laughter had shaken the room. Then at the end, when a sense of shame had reduced them to gravity, he had again wrecked all ; for after regarding them long and pensively, and wagging his head more in sorrow than anger, he had enunciated in his queerest accents just these words : " It's fearful to contemplate " (presumably in reference to the seriousness of their offence) ; whereupon they had again yielded themselves to an outburst that nothing could restrain.

The anecdotes of "Judy" were numberless. Once, at a too hilarious festival in the College Hall, the occupants of opposite tables took to pelting each other with bread, and the climax of merriment was reached when "Judy" rushed down from the High Table and reproachfully addressed one of us in his indescribable accents: "You threw a roll." That was beyond denial; but as everyone was throwing a roll, or, as we called it, "casting his bread upon the waiters," the offender found security in numbers.

Again, there was a memorable scene in Lower Chapel, when "Judy" inadvertently read a considerable portion of the service twice over, and did not realize his error until he found an unusually attentive congregation following him with amused interest. His face, and his voice, at that dreadful moment, will not readily fade from the recollection of those who were present. He was a good and kind old man, and well liked by his pupils and all who knew him intimately; but for the rest of the school his influence was ruined by a mere physical peculiarity. For them it was a case of *vox et præterea nihil.*

Then there was the Rev. Stephen Hawtrey, head of the mathematical staff in those bygone days when mathematics were looked upon at Eton as hardly a serious study. He had a majestic presence as he stood before the blackboard; his white hair, his long flowing beard, his eagle eye, his sonorous voice, all gave him the appearance of some

venerable sage. He taught in the Rotunda; the "Round School," a big room shaped like a theatre, with a stage-platform for the teacher; but in truth it was a tragedy that was enacted there, for poor old Stephen was well named after the proto-martyr, and was entirely at the mercy of the boys—his "noble boys," as he was wont to call them, though they showed little nobility in their treatment of him. Not infrequently they bolted from the room before the hour had struck, on which occasions his cries were as vain as those of the anguish-stricken father in Campbell's poem:

"'Come back, come back,' he cried in grief."

And in the end old Stephen, too, was invariably "left lamenting." Not an atom of work was ever done in the "Round School" by anybody; the boys chatted, laughed, played, or cheered their teacher's oratory, as the whim took them, and the "extra work," as it was called, that had to be done out of school, was usually copied from some one else, the whole class often showing up the same.

"Beneath this roof he sought scholastic joys,
And laboured long amidst his noble boys:
His noble boys, to meet their Stephen's will,
Solved mazy problems with peculiar skill;
So keen their rivalry and thirst for fame,
The work of twenty often seemed the same.
Ah, peaceful system, when with nod profound
He pleaded, and his audience dangled round!
Ah, happy pleader, and still happier danglers,
How few your wrangles, and how few your Wranglers!"

Such, I remember, were the opening verses of some "Memorial Lines to be inscribed on the Round School," written by one of Stephen Hawtrey's former pupils, and circulated at Eton. We thought such scenes amusing at the time; but now I look back with some compunction to my own share in them, and comfort myself with the idea that perhaps the old man was more wily than we were aware of, and was merely playing a humorous, if helpless, part when we believed him to be heart-broken. For he was the uncle of that distinguished comedian, Charles Hawtrey.

Next to "Stephen" and "Judy," in the memories of those Eton days, comes "Johnny" Yonge, who took the "second division," i.e. the class at the top of the Fifth Form and below that of the Headmaster. He was a small, parched, somewhat peevish-looking man, genial enough in private life, but in school he wore a defensive glare, which seemed to indicate a permanent feud with his class, though, in reality, things went pleasantly enough, the boys making a habit of ironically cheering his *obiter dicta* (his odd pronunciation of certain words, e.g. "sech" for "such," was a daily delight), while he glared at them ferociously, but in effect harmlessly, from his desk. He was supposed to have a special antipathy to boys who had passed, as sometimes happened (it was so in my case), direct from the third division to the first, presumably because he thought it a personal slight to himself that anyone

should skip Division II ; and it was said that whenever, owing to the Headmaster's occasional absence, he took part of the Sixth Form, as well as his own, he made a point of " calling up " any such delinquent, and of tripping him up in the lesson ; after which he would viciously remark that " those who rise to the first division from the third ought to take care that their performances justify sech promotion." At this there were loud cheers, during which " Johnny " Yonge would eye the class with a stare of stony defiance.

The Volunteer Corps in those days did not arouse an atom of interest, except on the one occasion of an annual turn-out of the force, when there marched in the rear a very genial and popular master named Hale, a sort of Etonian Falstaff, whose immense girth had caused certain narrow Buckinghamshire stiles to be known as " Halometers." When *he* appeared, in the capacity of quartermaster, perhaps uniformed, and (so far as might be) belted, the enthusiasm knew no bounds.

French masters usually had a rough time at English public schools before the *entente* had established that perfect and wonderful accord to which both nations now owe so much ; but it was a curious fact at Eton that it was an Englishman whose French class was in those days the scene of continuous uproar. The one limit which the boys set to their persecution of such unfortunates was that it must not be carried to a point where the victim might report his troubles to the

Headmaster; *that* would have been even more dangerous to us than humiliating to him. It was, therefore, with some concern that on one occasion we saw our tragic comedian rush wildly from the schoolroom and make for the Headmaster's door. There, for a moment or two, he stood undecided, his hand half-raised to the bell; then, to our relief, he turned back with rueful countenance, and we knew that thenceforth he was ours. For discipline, thus lost, could rarely, if ever, be restored; indeed, the attitude of an Eton boy towards a master who attempted to reassert his vanished authority was one of surprised indignation. I once overheard an old woman, who was driving a very dejected donkey along the High Street at Eton, exclaim in a loud voice: "He wants to be the master of me, but I'll *never* let him" (with a huge emphasis on the "never"). That was just how we felt in such cases as those I have described.

There was also an Italian master, whose inexperience was practised upon very shamelessly by those who desired to get early out of school in order to secure a Fives-court, or for some similar reason. As the lesson was proceeding, a boy would be taken ill—a faint, perhaps, or some sudden ailment—and several others would generously offer to help him in his endeavours to limp out of the room. The master, insisting that the aid of one or two was sufficient, would try to detach the hindermost members of the queue; but

usually the whole gang contrived to make good their escape, with repeated assurances, "Back presently, sir," which in no recorded case were fulfilled.

A diverting story, current when I was at Eton, referred to an old member of the staff, the Rev. W. L. Hardisty, who, it was said, once met some boys riding in a carriage and thereby breaking a traditional rule. To avoid his observation they put up umbrellas, though the weather was perfectly fine ; and he, thinking it must be raining, followed their example, and so passed them without challenge. I have a personal reason for mentioning this legend ; because Dean Inge has genially related the same story of myself, assigning it to the period, a decade or two later, when I was a master at Eton and he a boy. Truth, however, compels me to decline the honour.[1] The Dean does not say whether he was himself one of such a party ; but I can easily believe that, even at that age, the young theologian's tendency to be "out of bounds" had asserted itself. Had he been in the school at the earlier period when Windsor High Street was forbidden, he would probably have got into trouble at the dangerous turning known to Etonians as "Damnation Corner," a spot where many a wanderer from the fold found himself suddenly under arrest.

[1] Possibly the mistake arose from the fact that, in a still earlier umbrella-story, a boy named Salt had distinguished himself by offering an umbrella to Queen Victoria when she was caught in a shower of rain. I wish I could claim to have been the hero of either incident.

I would suggest, however, that if the incident really befell old Mr. Hardisty, the more probable cause of his opening his umbrella was that he as little desired to be bothered with the boys as they with him, and that he was glad to avail himself of a fiction which saved him the trouble of a wearisome and probably fruitless pursuit. For the chase of Eton boys was not quite so alluring a sport as they themselves were apt to imagine ; in truth a master saw quite enough of them in class-room, without wishing to run after them along high-roads and by-ways. Mr. Hardisty, I am sure, from what I remember of him, would have chosen the less arduous course.

Here I would like to mention an alliance which seems in a small way to have prefigured the League of Nations. It was a League of two nations only, but they were the two whose quarrels have caused untold misery in Europe for over half a century. At Eton, in the 'sixties and 'seventies, the German master was Herr Griebel, and the French master M. Roublot ; and they were such close friends that it was common to see them taking their afternoon stroll together, a habit which was continued unbroken during the years of the Franco-German War. Day after day, while their countrymen were slaying each other, and the newspapers were recording a tale of hatred and horror, these two representatives of the combatant nations gave a personal exhibition of the fact—far more important than Sedan—

that Frenchmen and Germans have no real cause for animosity, and that war is not only a barbarism, but a lie. I can still see them pacing side by side tranquilly down the High Street of Eton; and though we thought little of it at the time or even laughed at it, as our boyish minds were then full of the silly glamour of battles, the sight came back to me in after years as one of much significance.

Mr. Gilbert Coleridge's *Eton in the 'Seventies* (1912) brought back to my mind very vividly some of the scenes which it describes. But it struck me that, in his stories of masters, many of which are amusing enough, Mr. Coleridge showed less consideration than some earlier writers, in holding up to ridicule certain "beaks" who, though retired from Eton, were still living, and likely enough to study those annals of the decade which they so adorned. College servants and Brocas "cads" were supposed to be fair game for satirical remembrance; but even there I could wish that the memory of Powell, the purveyor of footballs to the boys, had been more tenderly treated. He was a dear old man; no mere itinerant, but as much a part of the school as many of the masters, and I still cherish among my Eton papers a letter of thanks I received from him for some trifling gift. But enough of the Caps and Gowns. It is time that I proceed to the Surplices.

V

CHAPEL BELLS

I HAVE sometimes thought that if that mysterious genius, Edgar Poe, had, like Shelley, been educated at Eton, and had survived the experience, he might have added a fifth stanza to his wonderful poem, "The Bells," and have immortalized for us the resonance not only of silver bells, golden bells, brazen bells, and iron bells, but also, and most significant, of chapel bells. For there is no sound that bides more steadfastly in the mind of an Etonian than that rather harsh, persistent signal, familiar to every member of the school, like a voice which, without being unduly raised, conveyed an imperious summons which none could ignore.

Once, with two or three school-fellows, I walked, or ran, to Burnham Beeches on a Sunday afternoon, an excursion which it was just, and only just, possible to make between the hours of dinner and chapel. The pitiless bells began while we were still on our return, some distance from Eton, in the fields beyond the Slough road ; and I have never forgotten the breathless anxiety of our final rush, which just brought us to the chapel as the Provost and Headmaster, preceded by the

Sixth Form, were making their pompous entry. It was the theme of one of my nightmares in after years.

The Provost at this time was Dr. C. O. Goodford, universally known, from his initials, as "The Cogger." His personal appearance was rather singular, and his peculiarities were enhanced for us in the conditions under which we usually saw him, viz: being conducted in the Sunday service from his stall at the west end of the chapel to the altar or the pulpit. The chapel is a building of considerable length; and in this stately march the "Cogger" was preceded by the verger, Alfred Holderness, who from the official baton which he carried was known by us as "Holy Poker." A stranger watching this ceremony, and judging from a merely external point of view, might too readily have assumed that Holderness was the Provost; just as on the occasion when Mr. Gladstone and Lord Lyttelton were married at the same time, a visitor to the church is said to have remarked, as he indicated Mr. Gladstone: "It is easy to see which is the lord." But it was not so; for the Provost was not the grey-haired veteran, bearing himself with a dignity which might have graced the highest office in the kingdom, but the short, stumpy figure who, owing to the infirmity of old age, shuffled uneasily in the rear. Would the boys have been boys, if the humour of such a contrast had been lost on them?

But "Holy Poker," too, had his anxieties in

regard to this quaint procession ; for though his eastward march, under the Provost's eye, was quite safe and unimpeded, it was very different when he returned alone and unprotected to the ante-chapel ; for then the more daring of the Lower boys who were stationed along the nave would sometimes stick out a foot, as if by accident, in the hope of tripping him. In this, however (luckily, doubtless, for themselves), they never succeeded ; for Holderness was well aware of their intent, and his " footwork," to use a cricketing term, was so clever that he always came safely through the toils.

For the Collegers there were surplice-days and gown-days, when they were robed in white or in black, according to the character of the day ; and it was a rare treat to the congregation when some unfortunate boy had adopted the wrong costume, and was exhibited in glaring contrast with the rest. On one such occasion, when a small Colleger had donned the gown by mistake, it was said that during the prayers a big Oppidan reared up his head, like a sea-monster, from a neighbouring pew and in a low but audible voice remarked to the unfortunate gown-boy, " You b—— black sheep ! "

If such conduct in a school chapel seems surprising, the blame must be laid, in part at least, on the long and wearisome choral services, beautiful in themselves, but quite unsuited to the majority of boys, which were then held on Saints'

days as well as Sundays, and were felt to be a burden except by those who officiated in them. The anthems especially oppressed us ;[1] and in nearly every anthem-book there was written, in pencil, *the time* which each musical composition would need for its performance. I remember reading in an old book, in a college library at Cambridge, a bitter complaint of one who had suffered from such services, and who averred that even the genealogy in the First Gospel was once inflicted on the congregation in musical form, and that while the bass was holding forth the existence of Abraham, " the tenor, in defiance of nature and chronology, was begetting Isaac, the contra-tenor begetting Jacob, and the treble begetting Joseph and all his brethren." The bass in the Eton College choir, at the time of which I am speaking, was a big man with a big voice who was elegantly known among us as " Thunderguts." In him, and in his sonorous utterances, we took a certain interest.

I have heard that some pupils of the Rev. G. Dupuis, amused by his habit of saying " God bless my soul ! " once went to the organist and asked him, as a favour, if he would arrange for the performance of an anthem which they especially liked : its title, they said, was " God bless my soul " (Dupuis). The organist, pleased that such

[1] There were exceptions, however. Lord Coleridge has recorded that to him, " the music in the College Chapel on Sundays was a great joy."

interest should be felt in the chapel services, was quite ready to oblige the boys, but unfortunately could find no such anthem or composer on his list. But though we were thus deprived of an opportunity of hearing Dupuis' sacred music, there were certain recurrent hymn-tunes, which, having a lively and natural lilt, were taken up by the whole congregation with such relish that even the deep vibrations of Thunderguts' voice would then be drowned ; and in the Psalms, too, we were ever on the alert for such passages as those where the organ, suiting sound to sense, would emphasize by its hops and jumps the news that the land " brought forth frogs," or that the mountains " skipped like rams and the little hills like young sheep." We had been often admonished to take a more earnest part in the service ; but when we did so, the tunes in question had to be discarded.

By this time I think the reader will agree with me that a remark made by J. Brinsley-Richards, in his *Seven Years at Eton*, that " there was never amongst us what is called a strong religious movement," may be accepted without demur. The religious movement, as far as the chapel services were concerned,[1] was confined to the

[1] There was, of course, some religious feeling among both the masters and the boys. On one occasion the revivalists, Messrs. Moody and Sankey, visited the school by request ; and I remember being introduced to Mr. Moody in a colleague's house as " another Eton master." He remarked at once : " Well, I suppose we are all working for the Great Master." No opportunity was missed of " improving the occasion " !

Provost and Fellows, or Oddfellows, as they might well have been termed, a few old gentlemen, retired masters, who, having little to do on their week-days, marched out in force on Sundays to afflict us with long and tedious homilies. Even now I can hear in thought their interminable dronings and pipings; the sing-song cadence of the Provost's voice, with its Dorsetshire *burr*, was indeed so imprinted on the memory of his victims that some of them could imitate it to the life.

Let it not be supposed that I, a mere heretic, am exaggerating in this description. In some remarks which Dr. Lyttelton, himself Headmaster of Eton, contributed in 1912 to Mr. Gilbert Coleridge's *Eton in the 'Seventies*, he made fun of the sermons, and of the very voices of his predecessors in the pulpit. The "wherefore" of Dr. Goodford, he said, was pronounced "wuffaw"; and, when Bishop Chapman preached, "at the end of twenty-five minutes we listlessly sauntered out." No doubt we did; but if the sermon occupied only that time, we must have been unusually lucky, for I well remember how we listlessly sauntered out after sermons of almost twice that length. Yet even *that* is a trifle in the scale of human endurance; for a Welsh landlady apologising to me, one Sunday evening, for being late with the supper, once gave as a reason that she had been to the village chapel, and added; "I don't think a sermon ought to last *more* than two hours; do you, sir?"

My school-fellow, Sir George Greenwood, reminds me of a terrible occasion when Dr. Goodford took for his text, "Remember Lot's wife," and kept repeating it like a refrain: "Remember*rrr*—Lot's—wife." Nobody, he says, remembered the sermon, but everyone remembered Lot's wife. I must have missed that particular homily; but I have a clear recollection of one which Bishop Chapman gave us on "Closet Prayer," and of the audible comments which it evoked from the irrepressible Tom ——. Nor was it the boys only that suffered. In the ten years which I spent at Eton as an assistant master I was much helped in my efforts to endure the chapel services by happening to possess a small edition of Wordsworth's poems which was so bound as somewhat to resemble a prayer book. Thus, for me, "The Excursion" was often a blessing (and a reality) for which I could not but be grateful. In listening to the Provost's well-nigh interminable sermons, it was agreed on all hands that the right method was not to chafe or become restive under them, but to trust to the soporific effect of the sing-song cadence, a peculiar rise and fall of the voice which became as familiar to thousands of Etonians as the chapel bell itself. Some of them could imitate it to perfection; one expert in this art (if report be true) was Alfred Lyttelton, that famous cricketer and less brilliant politician.

We did not fail to remark, when there was a death in the school, the vulture-like avidity with

which the preacher would pounce on the subject ; nor did it escape notice that our deceased schoolfellow, whose true character was of course well-known to us, invariably figured in these obituary sermons as a boy of deep Christian piety, a shining example to us sinners who were left behind. Why is it that those who have the charge of boys so often underrate their intelligence in this respect, and incur ridicule at the very moments when they most desire to impress ?

Perhaps the strangest form that religion took at Eton was that of an interest in missionary enterprise ; for we used to have periodical sermons about carrying the Gospel to the heathen, though, if there were ever a pagan spot on the earth, it was that pleasant school by the Thames. Some of the elder boys were now and then infected by the passion for making proselytes. On one occasion a rather idle youth, who had lately left Eton, wrote to tell his tutor that he had decided to become a missionary to "the poor perishing heathen"—in his case, to the Chinese, a people much less ignorant than many of their self-appointed rescuers.

On a later occasion, during Edward Lyttelton's mastership, a letter was received from an alleged Chinese gentleman, who signed himself "Ching Ping," offering to bring a Chinese Mission to Eton, in order to teach the boys, who were permitted and encouraged to break up hares with beagles, the elements of religion and humanity.

It was hinted in the Press that Mr. Ching Ping came from this side of Suez ; and Dr. Lyttelton was reported to have said to an interviewer that he thought he knew who wrote the letter. I, too, could have named the writer. The pity was that he did not accept Ching's proposal.

The pulpit-platitudes of which I have spoken naturally defeated their own object, and the boys, instead of being religiously impressed, sought recompense in the humorous features of the scene, which were more frequent than might be supposed. For example, the Rev. Furse Vidal, one of the Chaplains, or " Conducts " as they were called, was highly appreciated by us, not only for the breakneck speed at which he got through his task, but on account for the queer slips, " Spoonerisms," and transpositions of words which he sometimes made in the process, as when he adjured us to " Rend your garments and not your heart." We felt that the text as thus presented was much more likely to be fulfilled by us than in its original form. Such were some of the religious exercises that were associated in our minds with the clamour of the chapel bell.

VI

THE RENDING OF GARMENTS

THE reference to the sanction erroneously given by one of the Eton College Chaplains to the rending of garments, in preference to the rending of hearts, prompts me to say a few words about that strange practice, peculiar, as far as I know, to Orientals and to schoolboys. At Eton the rending of garments was not uncommon, which is the less surprising as the expense of tailors' bills was defrayed by the parents, the system being that a boy, when new clothes were needed, applied to his tutor for an "order," which was then handed to the tailor whom he had selected as his own. Opinion among the boys was much divided as to the respective merits of the several firms. When I was a house-master, one of my pupils once begged to be allowed to change his tailor, and on my asking why he preferred his new choice, said: "Oh, sir, he's awfully good. He gives you blue in your breeches." This interested me; because what a visit to a tailor's had generally given me was "the blues" of another kind.

The familiar jokes about tailors (and with tailors I would couple hatters) have always

"COLLEGERS" IN 1871

Mr. H. E. Luxmoore, Master in College, in centre of second row; with A. A. Tilley on his right, and G. C. Macaulay on left.

seemed to me most lamentably out of place, the subject being far too serious for jest. At Eton a certain amount of anxiety as to one's attire could not be avoided: the boys tried to dress well because they were afraid of each other, and the masters because they were afraid of the boys. I have never forgotten how, when walking "up Windsor," I once heard a boy say to his companion: "Salt's got a new hat." In a remark of that sort it is the *tone* that counts rather than the words; and I did not detect any innuendo that in my case a new hat was specially noted as supplying a long-felt want; nevertheless, it was a hint against allowing such matters to drift as I was apt to do. Thus we dressed not to please ourselves, but to placate the criticism of others, and in our desire to avoid being thought queer we were ourselves queerer than we knew.

To me, the surprising thing about the deliberate or even the careless rending of garments is that, as it may involve so great an ordeal as a visit to the tailor, it is not more studiously avoided. When I went before my Eton tailor I went in dread, and the longer the visit had been postponed the worse it was for me in the end. Something was sure to have gone wrong with the suit I was wearing, and I bethought me of guilty Nature, in Milton's Ode:

> "Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
> Should look so near upon her foul deformities."

Then it was vain to hope that the date of my last visit would escape observation ; for there was invariably some tell-tale lappet, or a lining of waistcoat pocket, on which a trade-mark was inscribed, and though no word was spoken on the subject, I used to see the Maker glance at it as if casually, but with a significant look in his eye which showed that the sorry secret was discovered. On such occasions a customer is conscious of what the poet calls an " awful alienation, holy scorn " on the part of his tailor, which is far more grievous than any complaint or reproach.

" I bear what I can, and suffer what I must," were the words in which Shelley described his feelings in regard to fashionable dress ; and he avowed that to him a hat was a crown of thorns and a stiff collar a halter. I am sure that there were not a few Eton masters who complied in the same spirit of weary endurance with the prescribed costume, the Nessus-robe of the black coat and the torture of the top hat.

There were some, indeed, whose compliance fell lamentably short of the standard which custom required, and were consequently subject at times to the slings and arrows of criticism levelled at them in secret. One of these, a man of letters who was as careless in regard to his personal appearance as he was fastidious in literary tastes, was once walking a few yards ahead of me as I came out of a masters' meeting side by side with another colleague, a sort of Mr. Turveydrop, whose

immaculate dress and deportment were the admiration of all. "Now just look at that coat," said Turveydrop, indicating with a nod the frayed and shabby collar that was visible above the gown in front of us. He spoke in a suave and mellow voice, and in a tone that was meant to be unheard by the wearer of the coat, but it *was* heard, and at once an angry inquiring face was turned full upon him. Disgusted though I was at the snobbishness of the man, I could not but marvel at the aplomb with which, without any suspicious pause or hesitation, he merged the offensive remark into a seemingly innocent discourse. *He* certainly would never have been impelled by the Rev. Vidal's injunction to rend either heart or garments—garments, because he placed much too high a value upon the sartorial view of life; and heart, because he had little or none to rend.

When I had left Eton, my own descent from respectability was rapid and reckless. I remember being hooted in a London Square on a summer day because I was wearing a straw hat; and in the British Museum reading room I used to be mistaken for one of the attendants, owing to my wearing a grey suit instead of black. I consoled myself with the thought that I was perhaps a pioneer in these matters (as in fact it turned out); but such hope could hardly compensate me for the discomfort incurred at the time. To crown all, as I was returning home in the dusk of a

winter afternoon I was invited to help a cabman to carry some luggage into a London house. This I did; but owing to a false sense of shame I disappeared before receiving the sixpence to which I was entitled. Still, there have been worse cases than mine: that of Francis Newman, for instance, who gravely told a friend that he had had his coat for twenty years and "could not match the cloth"; also that when he went for a walk, the boys used to call after him, "Who's your hatter?" but, strange to say, he had been unable to give them the desired information.

For many years I have been convinced that as regards clothes and head-gear, it is better to lead a nomad life than to have some appointed tailor or hatter who, like the Eton tyrants, may exercise a grievous authority over one. Professor J. B. Mayor once told me that he had been asked by some insurance official to get a certificate signed by "his doctor"; but this he could not do, because he *had* none, having acted for a long lifetime on the salutary principle that he who is *modicus cibi* is *medicus sibi*. So it is in regard to that dreaded personage "my tailor"; and the moral that emerges is that the injunction of the prophet Joel to "rend your heart and not your garments" was wisely and literally inspired. It was a pity that the Eton chaplain reversed it as he did.

VII

A WORD FOR SILLY BILLY

OF all chapel-goers in those bygone days the most untiring was "Silly Billy," *alias* Mr. William Leggatt. In some of the many books written about Eton, reference has, I think, been made to this weak-minded old man, who used to attend the choral services at the Eton chapel, as well as at St. George's in Windsor, where Sir George Elvey—"Saint George," as he was called—presided at the organ. Needless to say Silly Billy did not escape our attentions, as he sat crouched and muttering rapidly to himself by the steps of the chapel. It was said that he knew the Bible by heart; and it was a perennial joke among Eton boys to ask him whether anything was said in the Scriptures about the Royal Family. To this he invariably returned the same surprising answer, which at once shocked and amused us, viz: that the Bible made no mention "of any such cattle." I do not think our loyalty was in the least impaired by this, as we knew him to be soft-witted, but it puzzled us that a devout church-goer should be capable of such irreverence; indeed, I could not have believed it of him, had I not myself been present at such interrogations.

He had been asked the question so often that he seemed to regard it as a sort of challenge, and snapped out his reply with impatience, as if he were weary of giving the information, yet felt that it must be given.

Here, looking back, I feel that we did Silly Billy less than justice. For why is the habit of talking to oneself considered a "melancholy" one? When I hear it so described, I am perforce reminded of Coleridge's defence of the nightingale's song against a similar misunderstanding:

> "A melancholy bird! Oh, idle thought!
> . . . 'Tis the merry nightingale,
> That crowds, and hurries, and precipitates
> With fast thick warble his delicious notes."

That is just what I now feel about the soliloquist. He has evidently plenty to say, and he seems to enjoy saying it. I am aware of no melancholy in him, nor can I regard him as a fit subject for ridicule. We are all familiar, of course, with those immemorial scenes in the comic papers, where some enthusiast is passionately reciting on a lonely seashore, with a nurse-maid and half a dozen children watching him in amazement from behind a rock. No doubt there is embarrassment in the sudden discovery of such an audience; but the humour lies not in the soliloquy itself, but in the circumstances which attend it, and in the mistaken choice of a locality. On the stage the soliloquy is accepted as an essential feature of drama; and we do not laugh when the hero, or the

villain, speaks his very audible "aside." Why, then, should those who, like Silly Billy, have recourse to the "aside" in actual life be classed with the village idiot?

A few years ago, when I was staying in a cottage in the Vale of Grasmere, I was interested to hear from my landlady that her father had known the poet Wordsworth by sight. "He told me," she said, "that he used to meet Mr. Wordsworth on the road near Rydal, muttering and mumbling to himself. My father did not think much of him: in fact, he thought he was out of his mind." That is just the sort of conclusion to which over-hasty people are apt to jump, when they hear some one soliloquizing.

But it is for the blessed contrast which he presents to the Talking Bore that we ought to think less hardly of the man who talks to himself. Whenever I see him so volubly addressing the person whom he has the best, the only right thus to harangue, I think: "There, but for the grace of God, goes a man who might have been talking to *me*." So viewed, the habit, especially in the old and garrulous, is felt to be a merciful one; for surely it will be agreed that *secumlocution* (if I may coin a word which seems to be needed in the vocabulary) is much to be preferred to circumlocution. It might be well if secumlocution-boxes were erected in a good many places where telephones are now so abundant.

Even we Eton boys ought to have appreciated

Silly Billy more than we did; for we suffered severely at times from the visits of roaming chatter-boxes who would invade a school-fellow's room and waste an evening in gossip, unless they were dislodged by one or another of the methods then in vogue, none of which was summary, for in our manners we were very observant of the courtesies. The most favoured plan was to pass on these "Leeches," as we called them, to a neighbour, by luring them to another room and leaving them there; a device quite inexcusable in itself, yet practised, I fear, not by boys only but by grown-up victims of the garrulous. If these pests had stayed in their own rooms, and talked to themselves as Silly Billy did, it would have been better for all parties.

Again, what of the folk who are bent not only on talking but on reading aloud to us, especially their own poems, a practice of such antiquity that it is surprising to find the great body of the world's listeners still as patient and defenceless as they were in the days of Martial. Witness one of his many epigrams on the subject; in so far as I can translate it.[1]

> "Why is it that ere you recite, fond poet,
> Around your throat you pull
> A woollen scarf? Our ears—too well I know it—
> Have greater need of wool."

Now, as everyone carries with him a natural and God-granted audience, to wit, himself, it is strange with what awful persistency the poetical reciter

[1] *Epigrammata* IV, 41.

will follow his prey. So absorbed is he in his pursuit that he will read to you Keats's "Ode to a Grecian Urn" (we used to read Keats in College), and even the significant lines,

> "Heard melodies are sweet, but those *un*heard
> Are sweeter . . .",

without the least perception of their relevance; and you will probably be too tender-hearted to point it out to him.

Secumlocution, then, the practice of talking, reciting, or reading aloud to oneself, is far from being a melancholy or ridiculous habit; on the contrary, it is one which, in an over-loquacious world, is a great preventive of suffering. It may, of course, like other tendencies, be carried to excess, as in Silly Billy's case; but in moderation it is both humane and helpful, and deserves encouragement rather than the contemptuous pity which it commonly evokes.

I have heard that on one occasion when Silly Billy was sitting in the Cloisters at Eton, and as usual talking to himself, a girl who passed him said in a tone of commiseration, "Poor Silly Billy!" upon which he jumped up and gave her a box on the ear. Doubtless he felt, in a dim unconscious way, that the young lady ought rather to have been grateful to him for the self-control with which he was restricting his conversation to the sphere where it caused the least amount of inconvenience.

I have even known of a case where secumlocution was practised with excellent results at a crowded dinner-table. This, too, was at Eton, where the parties given by the Headmaster, Dr. Hornby, were often so ill-organized that an assistant master stood the chance of finding himself seated between two strangers, both of the male sex, to neither of whom had he been introduced. That was just what happened once to my brother-in-law, J. L. Joynes; and when I asked him whether he had suffered much in those straitened circumstances, he said no; he had, in truth, rather enjoyed himself, as there was a loud buzz of conversation, in the midst of which he talked, recited poems, and sang.

But the function of the soliloquist may be looked at on a still higher plane. Who knows but it is self-exhortation in which he is engaged, a communing with his own heart, and that, like Danton, he is saying to himself; "Courage: point de faiblesse?" Whereas the chatterer to others is as the man who boasted himself on the receipt of many letters, of whom Thoreau remarked: "Poor fellow! It is evidently a long time since he heard from *himself*." No one could have said that of Silly Billy.

VIII

THE BOGUS SOLOMON

I HAVE no certain knowledge of what now happens at Eton to those amusing boys who, as we have learnt,[1] pretend that they do not work, though all the while they "do their best splendidly." Does the Headmaster, entering into the joke, do *his* best splendidly, and pretend to punish them with birch or cane, so as to carry on the delightful comedy? If Dr. Alington, as is said to be the case, is fond of epigrams and opera, he would here seem to have at hand a thoroughly Gilbertian situation.

In Hornby's time flogging had long become a farce, and owed its continuance not to any value it possessed as a corrective, but to a patriotic affectation on the part of the school, masters and boys alike, to revere it as a time-honoured institution. In two respects the Etonian attitude towards corporal punishment was very quaint. First, there was the pious pretence that there is something morally edifying in what Dean Inge has called "the wholesome birch," in face of the well-known fact that that instrument of discipline has associations (with the brothel) which

[1] See Preface.

are something worse than *un*wholesome. Secondly, and not less entertaining, was the argument often put forward by "old boys" (and boys they still were, in mental capacity if not in years) that as *they* were birched in their youth, and were "all the better for it," there could be nothing amiss with a method of correction which had produced such admirable results. It may surprise some of my readers to hear that over seventy years ago this particular balderdash, which is still common among public schools men, drew the ridicule of *Punch*.

> "Is the old dunce . . . 'all the better' for having been flogged? Could a worse booby exist? Can he have been a greater fool before he was flogged than he is now that he has been flogged? Is he not plainly incorrigible? If he were not, we should recommend him to get himself corrected by submitting once more to the degrading infliction which he advocates with such gusto, and the idea of which is so disgusting to everybody else that can be disgusted by anything." (November 29, 1856.)

In my early days at Eton I had to be present at floggings on many occasions, first as one of the two Lower-boy Collegers who then acted as "holders down," and afterwards as Sixth Form præpostor; and I certainly think that (in *Punch's* words) anybody who can be disgusted by anything would have been disgusted by *that* spectacle. It

was presumably for this reason, and because the unfortunate Headmaster could not do what the præpostors often did—turn away from the unpleasant sight—that Dr. Lyttelton at a later period discontinued the use of the birch and substituted the cane. I have a suspicion, too, but in this I am possibly misled by the natural vanity of an author—that Dr. Lyttelton may have been quickened in his decision by something which I had written on this very nasty and ineffective form of punishment. It is not, however, of the practice itself, but of the supposed Biblical precept giving sanction to it, that I now propose to speak. The humour of the situation lies in the fact that the Solomon whose wisdom was so often invoked, at Eton as elsewhere, was in fact a fraud and a sham.

A hoax, involving, as it usually does, something of the inconsiderateness of a practical joke, is not often to be commended, and indeed is seldom really amusing; but there are occasional exceptions to this rule, as in the case of this bogus Solomon, rank impostor that he is. For when the victim of a hoax is imposed on less by the trickiness of others than by his own cupidity in his eagerness to inflict pain, and when the resulting misapprehension is the jest not of the passing moment but of a long period of time, there is legitimate food for entertainment.[1]

How this fraudulent Solomon was originally

[1] See Chapter xxxiii in reference to "The Beagler Boy."

started on his long and prosperous career is a matter for conjecture; it would seem probable that some too zealous advocate of the birch must have fastened incautiously upon the words, "Spare the rod and spoil the child," as providing a high sanction for a dubious practice to which he was himself addicted, and that thus the quotation was widely taken up and popularized. The tendency to make a catchword out of some current saw or maxim is very widespread; and this would especially be the case when the injunction was of a kind that coincided with the inclination of the hearer. Certain it is that for some two and a half centuries "Spare the rod and spoil the child" has been the slogan of the boy-beater, and has been accepted—here we come to the hoax of the bogus Solomon—as a text from the Scriptures, whereas in fact it is a verse from a witty but somewhat indecorous passage in the *Hudibras* of Samuel Butler.[1]

It may be surmised that the second Samuel Butler, author of *Erewhon*, who also was a very irreverent satirist and wit, would have relished nothing more than to emulate his predecessor in having one of his own ironical sayings thus

[1] *Hudibras*, Part II, Canto 1, 844 (published in 1664). A signal instance of the absurd credulity with which any fable on the subject of flogging is still accepted, may be seen in the widespread belief that the London garrotte robberies of 1862 were put down by the lash; though, as a matter of fact, they were suppressed by the ordinary law before corporal punishment for that offence had even been legalized.

swallowed by religious folk as a gem from the Proverbs of Solomon. In many instances the terse and pungent lines of the author of *Hudibras* have become proverbial, but in this case he has surpassed himself.

> " What medicine else can cure the fits
> Of lovers when they lose their wits ?
> Love is a boy, by poets styled ;
> Then spare the rod and spoil the child."

So exclaims a certain too outspoken Lady, who is persuading the amorous Knight, Sir Hudibras, to undergo a whipping. It is significant that a comic writer, who frankly treats the subject as what it is, an indecent one, should have provided many generations of respectable parents and pedagogues with a supposed text from the Bible ! As some versifier has expressed it :

> " The pious Flagellant in search
> Of Bible-text to sanction birch—
> Could irony be subtler ?—
> Quotes Hudibras for holy writ,
> God's wisdom seeks in wanton Wit,
> Finds Solomon in Butler."

And the joke is not lessened, but rather enhanced, by the fact that there are genuine texts in Solomon's Proverbs which might have served the flagellant's purpose ; but it may be presumed that these, being less handy and compact than Butler's epigram, were for that reason outclassed and outstripped by the bogus one.

It has been pointed out by one or two writers that in most of these texts the literal sense is not

necessarily the true one, inasmuch as the same Hebrew word is translated "to instruct" and "to correct," and that "chastening" has a wider meaning than that of mere bodily chastisement. But to one who looks at the question rationally, such argument seems superfluous; for what can it matter to us whether the writer of Proverbs approved the birch or not? Text or no text—with or without Biblical sanction—the birch was certain to be in full employment, not because its use was enjoined in Scripture, but because it gave satisfaction to those who wielded it.

What is more to the point is to observe (and I used to enjoy drawing attention to it) that there is *one* text, at any rate, which, though its genuineness is beyond question, our flagellants, whether at Eton or elsewhere, have left severely alone, and have been well advised in so doing, viz: the dangerously comprehensive precept: "A rod for the fool's back." The absence of an age-limit has here doubtless acted as a deterrent. It is so much more satisfactory to quote divine authority for the chastisement of "my son," than to tamper with a text which might find an application still nearer home.

Not the least comical feature of the Solomon-Butler hoax is the dismay of a disillusioned flagellant when he first discovers that he has been the self-made victim of a confidence-trick. No hot potato is ever dropped more hastily;

and then there is the inevitable attempt to go off looking unconcerned, or perhaps, as in a case that I remember, to explain that he has merely quoted the saying as summing up the teaching of the wise man in the Book of Proverbs. The scene has always reminded me of the disappointment that, as we learn from records of big-game hunting, occasionally befalls a man-eating lion in the African wilds, when, on breaking into a camp by night, in the hope of getting a native negro or an immigrant coolie, he pounces by mistake on a bag of meal or salt, and after carrying it some distance is compelled to abandon it in disgust when his unhappy error is discovered.[1] There are few lions, and still fewer flagellants, who can take such a failure *cum grano*.

Quite the best statement of the rod-and-child problem is that given by " Mr. Dooley " :

> " Spare the rod and spile the child," said Mr. Henessy.
>
> " Yes," said Mr. Dooley ; " but *don't* spare th' rod, an' ye spile th' rod, th' child, an' th' child's father."

Unfortunately there is too much real wisdom in this amended version of the proverb to permit of its general adoption ; it cannot be expected to compete with a silly saying that enjoins, or is

[1] Such an incident is recorded in the *Memories of an African Hunter*, by Denis D. Lyell, and in *The Man-Eaters of Tsavo*, by Colonel J. H. Patterson.

thought to enjoin, a vicious practice. Let us be thankful, anyhow, for the entertainment provided in the comedy of the Bogus Solomon, which has already been before the public for over two centuries, and is likely to have a prolonged run.

Perhaps it is still in vogue at Eton. I have not made inquiry, but I have heard it rumoured that Dr. Alington, sacrificing to medieval superstition what must surely be his own personal feeling, has restored the rank old practice which his predecessor discontinued. If this be so, St. Hudibras ought to be adopted as the school's Patron Saint.

IX

"LORD'S" IN THE 'SIXTIES[1]

I WONDER whether the word "Lord's" still means as much to Eton boys as it did to us in the 'sixties? In those days it had a significance which surpassed that of any other spoken sound with which we were acquainted, conjuring up visions, as it did, of the most tremendous event of the year, the cricket match between Eton and Harrow. It so happened that when I went to Eton, in 1866, the school had suffered a series of grievous defeats, and the possibility of reversing the verdict that had been given against us for three years in succession was being discussed with an anxiety immensely more serious than that which is nowadays felt for the possession of the "ashes." To us the matter was far too grave for a metaphor; and I know of no words that can adequately express our feelings, as the time of the match approached, except those of De Quincey concerning a dream of great solemnity:

> "The morning was come of a mighty day—a day of crisis and of ultimate hope for human nature, then suffering mysterious eclipse, and

[1] Reprinted from *The Observer*, June 19, 1927.

labouring in some dread extremity. . . . Some greater interest was at stake, some mightier cause, than ever yet the sword had pleaded or trumpet had proclaimed."

The hopes of Eton at that time were centred on a player whose reputation has since become well established in the annals of cricket. I remember how a school-fellow, who had kindly undertaken to instruct me, a new boy, in the things that everyone had to know, pointed out a tall youth who wore an expression of the off-hand, devil-may-care order, and appeared to be chewing a straw, and said, "That's Bun-Jam." Utterly ignorant as I was, this information conveyed nothing to me; and it was with some impatience, as if I ought to have known what there had been no previous opportunity of learning, that my mentor explained that "Bun-Jam" was a nickname for the famous hitter, C. I. Thornton, whose feats, as then rapidly related to me, made a lasting impression on my mind. A few weeks afterwards my admiration was still further roused, when on going to the Windsor Fair, a scene prohibited to the boys by one of the many edicts that were not strictly enforced, I saw Thornton in the act of twisting the arm of one of the open-air stall-holders, who presumably had dealt with him unfairly in regard of a shy at the coconuts. Thenceforth I never wavered in the belief that "Bun-Jam" was a hero of more than mortal mould.

A wonderful hitter he was, even in those early days; but whether his audacity really helped the revival of Eton cricket, is a matter on which I dare not venture an opinion. His example certainly inspired courage: but when he failed, the disaster was apt to have a depressing effect on the rest of the team, especially as he went in early —first wicket down, if I remember aright—and was not kept in reserve, as "sloggers" now are, until the edge had been taken off the bowling. It was for *him* to ruin the bowling in its prime by knocking it over the ropes.[1]

The match of 1867, the first of which I was a spectator, marked a turning-point in the fortunes of the game, for though the weather caused it to be left unfinished, it flattered Eton's hopes as far as it went, and showed that the period of Harrow's marked supremacy had passed. The relapse in the following year, though, as events proved, only a temporary one, came as a terrible disappointment at the time; for, with Thornton as captain, much was expected of the Eton Eleven, and their defeat left us in a state bordering on bewilderment. The match, in fact, took a turn which journalists would now call "dramatic," when Thornton, after hitting Giles clean over the Pavilion, was bowled by him a few minutes later.

But with 1869 came C. J. Ottaway's match, a

[1] Perhaps the best remedy for the increasing dullness of modern cricket would be to cultivate big hitting as a fine art, and to have, as a matter of course, two or three swipers on each side.

triumph which at once atoned for all past misfortunes, and was the beginning of a series of victories which made "Lord's" a name as glorious in our ears as it had once been a word of dread. Never can I forget how, arriving on the ground in breathless anxiety, an hour or more after the commencement of the game (the first day of the match was not a whole holiday at that time), I inquired of a spectator what had happened, and he informed me, indicating Ottaway at the wicket, "*That* one has got a great many runs." Ottaway, in fact, made a century; and thanks mainly to his patient and skilful batting and to some fine left-hand bowling by John Maude, the match ended in a single innings victory for Eton.

At the end there was an orgy of wild excitement such as I had never dreamed of before, and have never witnessed since; and in the thick of it, as I afterwards remembered, I saw the Provost of Eton, Dr. Goodford, transformed into a Bacchanal, dancing bare-headed, and waving his hat like the maddest of us all. We heard with satisfaction a few days later that the Rev. Russell Day, who was ill, had written from his sick-bed a letter to Ottaway, in which he told him that the news of that victory had done him "more good than much physic." In like manner old Stephen Hawtrey was said to have stopped Maude in the street, and asked to be allowed to shake "that noble hand" which, by a wonderful "caught and bowled," had

disposed of Harrow's most formidable batsman. We all believed the story. It seemed exactly what Stephen Hawtrey would have done. But fifty-seven years later I was told by Maude himself that he had no recollection of the incident. It *ought* to have happened, anyhow.

I have not been to an Eton and Harrow match for more than forty years, but I can see the scene of it as clearly as if it were but yesterday, and still hear, in the intervals of the stentorian shouts of "Bowled" or "Played," the plaintive cry of the passing card-seller: "Cárd of the match, gentlemén." In those days the ground was a much more pleasant and spacious place than it now is, and had not been overbuilt with cumbrous enclosures for fastidious folk who need luxurious seats. The best viewpoint of all was then the top of the old pavilion, to which Eton masters had access on the Friday and Saturday in July that were so big with fate.

Of the match against Winchester (called "Lord's" by Wykehamists), which was played then, as now, at Winchester and Eton alternately, there is less to be said. A much more friendly feeling existed between the two schools than between Eton and Harrow, and this, curiously enough, somewhat lessened the excitement about the play. On one occasion, at the dinner in the College Hall that took place after the match, an Eton speaker, with the intention of being very polite, remarked that he would rather we were

beaten ten times by Winchester than once by Harrow ; but this, as was pointed out from the other side, was a rather dubious compliment—to Winchester. Still, the match, as played in Upper Club before a brilliant company, in which Dr. Goodford and his daughters were always prominent, could furnish its thrilling moments ; and one such I recall when an elderly stranger, standing just at the edge of the most select circle of onlookers, was seen to be labouring under intense excitement as the fortunes of the game swayed to and fro. For a time his exclamations caused no more than a mild amusement ; but it was felt to be a little embarrassing when he suddenly rent the air with a far-reaching cry of " Out—by God ! "

The upshot of the whole matter seems to be that cricket is essentially a game for youth, not for middle age. Personally, I own that, when watching a county match, I have often wished that the " veterans," in spite of the greater expertness they may have acquired, would transfer their energies to golf. " Back to Methuselah " may be a good watchword for scientists ; it is less suitable to cricketers. The Oxford and Cambridge match is, to my mind, better worth seeing than " the game of the experts," Gentlemen *v.* Players, and the reason is not far to seek ; for cricket, though now it has been built up into a high strategy, is at root a very simple, even a childish game—the running from the stumps at one end of the pitch to the stumps at the other end—and while it does

no violence to one's sense of humour to see a boy, or a young man, thus engaged, a middle-aged man *does* seem rather out of place in such a pastime. "Leather-hunting," too, however heroically persevered in, does not show off mature proportions to the best advantage.

Again, in those bygone times, we did not have to witness certain tiresome and laughable practices that are frequent to-day, such as the "gardening," in which many batsmen so industriously engage, or, that posturing and making feints with the bat, when not actually at the crease, which seems to be a confirmed habit with some wielders of the "willow"—generally with those who wield it unsuccessfully—as if they found a solace in Browning's lines :

> "All I aspired to be,
> And was not, comforts me,"

forgetting that such unfulfilled aspirations do not comfort the spectators. There was a story that one of my school-fellows, the Tom ——, of whom I have spoken, on seeing a member of the Eton Eleven make a spectacular swipe in practice at the nets, a few days after one of the crushing defeats at "Lord's," shouted to him the pertinent question : "Why didn't you hit like that on Saturday ?"

The only trace of over-elaboration in the Eton cricket of forty years ago was the growing interference of masters in the conduct of the match at

" Lord's." I remember how R. A. H. Mitchell, then " cricket-master " at Eton, would take his seat by the ropes at a point where the boy fielding at " long leg " could conveniently communicate with him, and thence send word to the captain when a change in the bowling seemed desirable. Doubtless the Harrow cricket-master did likewise ; but in such matters the transition from legitimate advice, given between the innings and off the field, to definite instructions smuggled out in a clandestine manner, was surely a thing to be regretted.

The Public School and the University matches are sometimes spoken of as mere " gala days," but they are much more than that ; and they have the great merit of being free from the professionalism which gives rise to the snobbish distinction between " gentlemen and players," and an excessive regard for " averages " and " records." " First-class cricket," as Mr H. D. G. Leveson-Gower has pointed out, " is becoming more and more a gate-money concern."[1] What else could be the result of turning a sport into a science, a recreation for youths into a business for men, and so throwing our cricket more and more into the hands of a professional class, fine sportsmen though they are, whose " play," however admirable, is in reality not their play but their work ? It is the amateurs, not the professionals, who are the " players."

[1] *Cricket Personalities*, 1925.

It says much for the abiding glories of cricket that its romantic aspects are not lost under these modern conditions, and that there is still so great a magic in the setting of the scene—the hushed expectation as the time for play approaches, the thrilling sound of the bell, the gradual clearing of the field, the slow egress of the umpires, followed in due order by the fieldsmen and the batsmen—a spectacle which seems to lack but a flourish of trumpets to make it resemble that of the lists in an ancient tournament, as in a picture out of *Ivanhoe.*

Such are the recollections awakened in an old-fashioned enthusiast like myself by a mention of the name " Lord's."

X

A LATIN VERSE MANUFACTORY

THE old maxim that a poet is born, and not educated to his trade, was not acted on in the schools of fifty years back. *Poeta fit, non nascitur,* seems to have been the belief of the great majority of Headmasters from time immemorial, and they accordingly set themselves to work, with an amount of patience and industry worthy of a less hopeless cause, to turn generation after generation of English schoolboys into nothing less accomplished than poets ; and this too in a dead language, where the would-be versifier is not only hampered by his natural lack of the poetic faculty, but is also profoundly ignorant of the idiomatic peculiarities of the tongue in which he is invited to compose. It is a fearful and wonderful thing to meditate on the number of lines which must have been written by schoolboys and schoolmasters in imitation of Ovid and Tibullus. In my own experience, by no means a long one, I calculate that I composed, as boy and master, considerably over thirty thousand.

I have often tried to imagine what would have been the feelings of the two Latin poets if they had foreseeen that they would be selected as the

OUR "YEAR"

A Parody on "The Smile and the Frown."

models for the nonsensical effusions of countless thousands of schoolboys in ages yet to come. I cannot believe that they would have felt themselves flattered by the thought; it seems more probable that they would have preferred to die without any foreknowledge of the mass of rubbish which would hereafter be written by their imitators. Let us, then, say of them, as Ovid wrote of his own parents:

> Felices ambo, tempestiveque sepultos,
> Ante diem pœnæ quod periere meæ!

Which, from the tutor's standpoint, might be freely rendered thus:

> "Blest were they both, who perished ere they knew
> What Eton boys in Latin verse would do."

I call it a Latin verse manufactory; for it was in truth as much a manual as a mental occupation, consisting largely, as it did, in collecting and copying stray scraps and fragments of verse, and old hackneyed phrases, which were then patched together in what was dignified with the name of "composition." "Hackneyed" is the exact word for it; and never probably was poor Pegasus more ill-used and hard driven than in thus being made the hack and hobby-horse of pedagogues and pupils. In an earlier age, when Latin was freely used, both in writing and speaking, as the vehicle of international communication, the writing of Latin poetry was an art which it was often possible, and sometimes even profitable, to acquire. But when Latin was only studied as a key to other

languages, and when various other subjects of at least equal importance were claiming our attention, the amount of time devoted to what was grandiloquently called "Latin verse" was nothing less than amazing.

But the writing of elegiacs, after the fashion of Ovid, was, of course, an agreeable exercise for those, whether boys or masters, who had the natural aptitude for it; and I well remember with what gratified feelings, when I was in Dr. Hornby's Division, I heard him on one or two occasions quote from verses that I had "shown up," as, for example, when Shakespeare's sonnet "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day," was to be turned into Latin verse. I set it down to my ill-luck that in both the years when I was under examination for the Newcastle Scholarship, with a hope of being in the "Select," the Latin verses which we were invited to compose were not the usual "longs and shorts," but lyrics or hexameters, and that I thus lost an opportunity of (so to speak) catching the examiner's eye. Fortune, however, made full amends to me in another and, for me, more important examination—that for the Eton scholarships at King's College, Cambridge—when Ovid was recalled to the throne. And, after all, if a particular form of Latin verse is made a special feature in education, it is rather absurd that it should be dropped out, and allowed no sort of value, when the proficiency of the scholars is put to the test.

Curiously enough, the persons who, next to Pegasus himself, were hit hardest at Eton by this exacting occupation were not the boys—for *they*, having no reputation to lose, were concerned only to get the job done, well or ill, and off their hands as quickly as possible—but some of the tutors, to wit, those who being less adept in correcting verses, or more intently occupied in other studies, found the tax on their time almost intolerable. And here the working of the law of demand and supply found an apt illustration; for it not infrequently happened that one of these malcontents would arrange, by private agreement with a colleague who wielded a more facile pen, to have his work done for him by another hand, and so to escape the detested ordeal of criticism and composition. For such services, which were kept very secret, the corrections being written on a separate sheet of paper and thence copied on to the boy's exercise by his own tutor, payment was made either in money or in kind, that is, by the performance, in exchange, of some other official duty. In my own case, as I happened to be glib in the Latin verse industry, I was able to put that gift to account in a manner most satisfactory to myself, by bartering "verses" for "desks"; the compact being that I should "look over" a certain number of verses, and my colleague in return would act as my substitute when it fell to my lot to be "in desk" in chapel. It was with the Rev. J. H. Merriott that I did good business in

this line: he desiring to avoid the Muses, and I the Saints.

Of the boys there were of course a few who could be taught to write Latin verses with some facility and success, though even in these cases it is probable that the time and labour might have been better expended on a more sensible object. But the great majority—or at least 90 per cent—were found by anybody who attempted to teach them to be entirely helpless and incapable in this matter of composition.

To set an ordinary English schoolboy the task of writing a copy of Latin verses was a piece of folly which, but for the blinding force of custom, would at once have been seen to be ridiculous. Such boys, when a poem was demanded of them, must perforce take their gradus and dictionary, and stolidly, mechanically, and laboriously, in a "fine frenzy" somewhat different to that of the inspired bard, try to hammer out the required amount of dog Latin. What could have been more absurd? We had troops of dull and backward boys, sadly in need of some sound and useful instruction; ignorant of history, ignorant of geography, ignorant even of spelling; quite unable to write a respectable letter in their own language—and we set them to follow that will-o'-the-wisp of scholarship, that *ignis fatuus* of education, and to write poetry in a dead language before they could understand prose in their own.

"It would be as reasonable," said Sydney

Smith, in his essay on classical learning, "to expect that all boys should be witty or beautiful as that they should be poets." Precisely so. When dull schoolboys were called upon to write Latin verses they were bidden to make bricks without straw—to do what by their very nature they were incapable of doing.

It is said that Shelley's tutor, George Bethell, a very stupid man, once left so many "false quantities" in one of a pupil's exercises that the Headmaster, Dr. Goodall, drew his attention to them. "You should have seen 'em before I looked 'em over," said Bethell. Like the lazy housemaid, he had "taken the top off the dust."

The fact that verse-writing was a waste of labour, though not openly confessed, was practically recognized at Eton by parents, boys, and teachers alike. "Please, sir, what is the use of verses?" was a question which every tutor was often asked by his pupils, and to which, if he were a strictly candid man, he found it very difficult to frame a conscientious reply. The boys, of course, heard their parents express utter contempt for the manufacture of verses, and were quick enough to detect that the whole affair was a hollow sham, kept up by force of custom and the determination of an older generation of schoolmasters to teach to the last what they were themselves taught as boys. Most of the younger masters were aware of the absurdity of teaching what is in truth unteachable, and knew that the

plea of "improving" a boy's mind by the process of verse-making was a mere afterthought, put forward, in want of anything better, by the apologists of the old classical system. Like the priests of old, they smiled behind the altar at the folly of the weekly sacrifice. We attempted to make an Ovid or Tibullus out of youths who had more the elements of a Squire Western or a Tom Tulliver. We enforced "original composition" on those who had not one idea in their heads; who had not only got nothing to say, but were also destitute of any means of expression. The hapless position of such ill-fated schoolboys, who were thus tormented every week in our great "centres of education," has often recalled to my mind that epigram written by the poet Campbell, and sent by him to a young lady who had asked him to write her "something original."

"An original something, fair maid, you would win me
To write—but how shall I begin?
For I fear I have nothing original in me,
Excepting original sin."

XI

IN PRAISE OF THE "CRIB"

I REMEMBER with pleasure how we Sixth Form boys at Eton used to prepare our lessons for Dr. Hornby by a process known as "crib-fagging." Several of us having met together, a fag was sent for, and was entrusted with the duty of reading the "crib" aloud, while we listened with the Greek or Latin text before us, occasionally calling to him to "stop a minute" when some passage puzzled us. It was an excellent method, practical and time-saving, and in marked contrast with the laborious system of the pupil-rooms.

It always seemed to me that the virtuous horror shown by Eton masters, and by nearly all schoolmasters, at the sight of a "crib," was a great absurdity; for to teach the ancient languages by a modern and rational method is precisely what has now become necessary, if we hope to preserve the study of classical learning, and to prevent Latin and Greek from becoming "dead languages" in a literal sense.[1] The prejudice that existed

[1] On this matter, if on few others, I am in agreement with the views expressed by Mr. Gilbert Coleridge in his *Eton in the 'Seventies*.

against "cribs" on the part of public-school teachers was not wholly unreasonable. A translation is a bad thing for a young boy, unless he is taught how to use it, still more so when he can only study it furtively, and when it happens, as was often the case, to be a villainously bad one; and in these circumstances a "crib" was a contraband article in all public schools, to be seized and confiscated whenever detected by the vigilance of the master, or betrayed by the awkwardness of the boy. But there are good "cribs" as well as bad; and the arguments in favour of their use are far too strong to be lightly set aside.

Critics of the old classical education were often asked what better method could be put in its place. The answer was (and is), some such scheme as that which was advocated over a century ago by one James Hamilton and was known as "the Hamiltonian system." The first principle was that a master should *teach* instead of "ordering to learn"; a rule which at first sight may seem a truism, but in reality involved a complete reversal of the ordinary procedure, in which the schoolmaster merely gives his pupils a clue to follow out by themselves with the help of dictionary and grammar; whereas the Hamiltonian teacher would impart the desired knowledge at once. To tell a boy the meaning of a Latin or Greek sentence, instead of leaving him to puzzle it out, rightly or wrongly, for himself,

was regarded by most public-school masters as a weakness discreditable to the teacher and enervating to the taught; but this was precisely what Hamilton advocated as the only effectual method of education—in the earlier stages. It was often said at Eton that boys came there not so much to learn as "to learn how to learn." The Hamiltonian system was based on the directly opposite principle.[1]

Hamilton insisted that pupils should be taught, by the use of literal interlinear versions ("cribs," in fact), to translate at once, instead of being made to get the rules of grammar by heart. He held that a vocabulary, the meaning of words, is the first and most essential foundation of knowledge; and that the direct study of grammar may be conveniently deferred until the pupil has incidentally become familiar with the various inflections of the language he is reading. Reading, he asserted, is the all-in-all of instruction; it is "the pure spring of nine-tenths of our intellectual enjoyments," and, as such, must not be sacrificed to grammar or composition, or to getting by heart anything whatever, "because these are utterly unattainable before we have read a great deal." In expressing this opinion, he was only following in the footsteps of previous reformers, Locke, and others, who had urged the same point with more or less insistence. "If grammar," says

[1] The substance of what follows is reprinted from an article printed in *The Gentleman's Magazine* in 1888.

Locke, "ought to be taught at any time, it must be to one that can speak the language already; how else can he be taught the grammar of it?" Hamilton, like other educational reformers before and since, made a vigorous attack on the most vulnerable points of the old classical system, such as the great expenditure of the pupil's time in contrast with the smallness of the results. The boy, he said, is kept "like another Sisyphus, the whole time of his scholastic life, rolling up the stone of science all the day, to see it roll down every night, and then be obliged every morning to renew the disgusting task."

It will be observed that grammar was not banished from his system, but merely postponed; and in like manner composition could be studied, by those who desired it, by a simple reversal of the same process with the same books. But his main principle was that the constructive work must follow, and not precede, the analytical; *reading* was to be the real basis of the pupil's education.

I think it must be admitted that, by the rejection of Hamilton's improved methods, the grammarians and their supporters won a victory which has cost them very dear. There was a significant remark of Hamilton's which bears on this point: "Mankind," he says, "are anxious for real knowledge, and will not much longer put up with the shadow of it. Either the teacher will find out a mode of communicating a knowledge of the learned languages in a shorter time and more

efficaciously than has been hitherto done, or the study of those languages will be relinquished altogether." It seems to me that this prophecy is even now in process of being verified, for the former alternative having been rejected by our classicists, the latter is being actually brought about by the institution of "modern sides" and the growing popularity of "modern subjects." The study of Greek, which might have been retained under a Hamiltonian system, is rapidly dropping out of the ordinary school curriculum.

There is no reason why educational reformers should accept or defend each and all of the principles included in Hamilton's system; still less are they concerned to take up the gauntlet on behalf of Hamilton's own wisdom or learning; for, as Sydney Smith long ago pointed out, the important question is not whether Hamilton was the wisest or weakest of men, nor yet whether his translations are good or bad ones, but "whether very close interlinear translations are helps in learning a language." The use of interlinear translations was, roughly speaking, the distinctive feature of the system.

"Cribs," as I have said, were officially forbidden at Eton; but none the less they were often in use. For myself, looking back, I feel sure that they were of more value to me than any oral instruction which I received from any Eton master, with the exception, perhaps, of William Johnson, a teacher of whom I must presently speak.

XII

JOHN MOULTRIE

LOOKING back to those old days at Eton, I have sometimes wondered why it was—from what feeling of shyness or of indifference—that I never mentioned my connection with John Moultrie, a man of distinction whose name was famous in the annals of the school, and who must have been well known personally to many Etonians of the older generation, including the Provost, Fellows, and Headmaster, Dr. Balston. He was my father's uncle; and it was largely through his advice that I had been sent to try for the scholarship by which I was enabled to go to Eton myself. He was still living, Rector of Rugby, when I was an Eton boy, and his death did not take place till 1874, a few months before I returned from Cambridge to Eton as a master. That he himself only missed by seven years being a school-fellow of Shelley, shows how the generations are linked together.

Moultrie came of an old Scottish family. His great-grandfather had emigrated to America in 1729, and his grandfather was Governor of East Florida, where another relative gave his name to Fort Moultrie. His father was Vicar of Cleobury

Mortimer, in Shropshire; and in 1811 the boy became a King's Scholar at Eton, where he was distinguished as a cricketer, an actor, and above all as a poet. Like Shelley, whose poetry he read with zest, he wrote Latin verses with ease and rapidity; but his early reputation rested on his poetical contributions to *Horæ Otiosæ* and the *College Magazine*, two school journals which had preceded the more ambitious and more famous *Etonian*.[1]

The poem through which he first came into note was "My Brother's Grave," which was printed in the *College Magazine* and again in the first number of *The Etonian*, and having often reappeared in anthologies has probably been more widely read than any of his other writings. That such beautiful and thoughtful lines should have been written by one who was still an Eton boy is astonishing; not less remarkable, though perhaps composed at a somewhat later date, were his more playful efforts, "Godiva," and "Maimune," which were published in *The Etonian* after Moultrie himself had gone to Cambridge. This is what his friend Praed wrote of him in *The Etonian*:

> "And what shall I say of Moultrie, the humorous Moultrie, the pathetic Moultrie, the Moultrie of 'Godiva,' and the Moultrie of 'My Brother's Grave'? I am safe at least in

[1] In this chapter I have included the substance of an article on Moultrie which I contributed to *Macmillan's Magazine*, December, 1887.

predicting that he will be great whatever he attempts, and that whether he chooses to laugh or weep he will laugh and weep to some purpose."

To me it seems that in spite of the deserved renown of "My Brother's Grave," the humorous Moultrie was certainly superior to the pathetic Moultrie; for his "Godiva" and "Maimune," written in that style of *ottava rima* which had been made popular by Byron, were wonderful for an author who had only just ceased to be a schoolboy, and have a charm which holds its own even by the side of Byron's masterpieces. In his "Godiva," the young Etonian anticipated Tennyson in the simile of "A summer moon half-dipt in cloud":

"And when her white and radiant limbs lay bare,
The fillet from her brow the dame unbound,
And let the traces of her raven hair
Flow down in wavy lightness to the ground,
Till half they veiled her limbs and bosom fair,
In dark and shadowy beauty floating round;
As clouds, in the still firmament of June,
Shade the pale splendours of the midnight moon."

It was as "Gerard Montgomery," an imaginary member of the staff of *The Etonian*, that Moultrie wrote; and in one of his poems he addresses several stanzas to his sister, in the discursive manner that was habitual with him, on her engagement to "T—— S—— Esquire";[1]

"A strain of soft and eulogistic flummery,
On your approaching nuptials, Miss Montgomery."

[1] Thomas Salt, of Shrewsbury.

His Etonian nom-de-plume, Gerard, was not forgotten by him, for he gave the name to his son, the Rev. Gerard Moultrie, an Anglican of extremely High Church views, in whose house I spent some time as a pupil.

But Moultrie was not destined to fulfil his school-fellow's prediction of greatness; indeed, it is noticeable that neither he, nor Praed, nor William Sidney Walker—the three clever young poets who between them wrote nearly all the best things in *The Etonian*, and that is no slight praise—realized the promise of youth. In Moultrie's case it was not the proverbial fate of poets, an early death, that blighted a rising genius, for he long survived his two gifted school-fellows and lived to the age of seventy-four. Had he died young, he might have achieved greater fame.

In 1822 he took his degree, and found himself again at Eton as private tutor to Lord Craven, who three years later presented him with the living of Rugby. Thenceforth the tone of his writings underwent a complete change, and the brilliant fancy of the early poems was not only succeeded by a more homely, in fact, a duller style, but was referred to in an apologetic manner as a youthful levity to be condoned and forgotten, in view of the "calm and serious thought" of the maturer writings, which were largely religious. *Tantum Religio potuit suadere malorum!*

It was at the Rectory in his later years that I used to see him, I being then at a preparatory

school in Rugby; and it now makes me realize my own antiquity when I reflect that I knew not only this hero of a bygone Etonian epoch, but still stranger, his mother, an old lady residing at the Rectory, who was, if I mistake not, a nonagenarian. I remember that I was much afraid of sitting next to her at dinner, owing to an unsettling habit that she had of suddenly transferring from her own plate to a neighbour's any superfluous victuals of which she desired to be rid, a generosity by which I was more than once victimized and compelled to consume her leavings. Moultrie was a kind, rugged-looking old man, who muttered poetry to himself, read Shakespeare aloud to us, and was rather incomprehensible to the mind of boyhood. I was told that "Uncle John," as he was called, was eccentric and absent-minded, and that he had once brought a long sermon to an end with the words: "And now, for what we have received, the Lord make us truly thankful." I used to listen intently on Sundays in the hope of hearing this formula repeated by him, but his sermons in that respect always proved a disappointment to me.

In 1843 Moultrie published a volume entitled *The Dream of Life*, the chief part of which is an autobiography in four books of blank verse, valuable less for its poetic merits, though it has some fine descriptive passages, than for its interesting references to the author's life at Eton, Cambridge, and Rugby, and to his personal friends

JOHN MOULTRIE

SIR GEORGE ELVEY
Organist at the Royal Chapel, Windsor.

in each period.[1] There is a graphic account of the Eton of Moultrie's schooldays, to us the Eton of more than a century ago, with its Long Chamber and theatricals, and much else that has now passed away, though the fagging, the Fourth of June, and the cricket matches remain almost as he pictured them ; also an affectionate tribute to the memory of Praed, that " nature of the purest mould," who had died two years before the poem was written, and a record of Moultrie's Cambridge friendships with many distinguished men, among them Macaulay, the " one of ampler brow and ruder frame " ; Derwent Coleridge, and Henry Nelson Coleridge, one of *The Etonian* staff ; Chauncey Hare Townshend, another Eton poet ; and the brilliant but ill-fated William Sidney Walker, whose mind was clouded by insanity in early manhood.

The final book of *The Dream of Life* is devoted to domestic subjects, and Moultrie's ministerial duties at Rugby, where the pastor-poet would fain have forgotten the wayward flights of his boyish years. But it must be confessed that those readers to whom the poet is of more interest than the pastor will often sigh for the " Gerard Montgomery " of the past, scapegrace though he was, and would willingly exchange the equable tenor of the staid and sober blank verse for the

[1] I have a copy of the book given me by my grandmother, the " Miss Montgomery " of *The Etonian*, with annotations concerning the persons indicated in the text.

rapid and sparkling stanzas of "Maimune" or "Godiva."

The description of Rugby, the little town "of various brick, irregularly built," with its surrounding tract of hedgerows, possessing no charm for the poet but those of "verdure and fertility," is not calculated to give entire satisfaction to patriotic Rugbeians, who may perhaps set it down to the poet's Etonian predilections. Justice is however done to the character of Dr. Arnold, with whom Moultrie was on terms of cordial friendship, though they were men of very diverse nature. It is recorded, too, how Wordsworth once visited Moultrie at Rugby, and conversed with him "on themes of loftiest import."

Moultrie's actual accomplishments did not entitle him to the place among the poets of his age which his early efforts seemed to forecast; yet he possessed a large share of the poetic temperament; he had the poet's vision, and the poet's yearning after truth and beauty. He deserves to be read and remembered among the *minora sidera* of his time, both for the merits of his early verse, and as one of a brilliant circle of which Eton is justly proud.[1]

[1] It was stated in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that no portrait of Moultrie had ever been engraved. The one included in this book was given me by his daughter.

XIII

"THE ADVENTURER"

THAT originality was not wholly lacking among Eton boys at the time of which I speak was shown in the pages of *The Adventurer*, a publication which was started in the later 'sixties, because, in its own words, "some thought it disgraceful that a school which had produced *The Etonian* could no longer support a magazine." *The Etonian* had already become a legend; indeed, it was difficult to realize that that most intellectual of school journals—the creation of Praed and Moultrie—had been edited by Eton boys only fifty years earlier. Doubtless there had been much idleness in those rough old days; but there was some genius also, and a complete absence of the systematic—one might almost say professional—addiction to field sports which afterwards became so prevalent. To realize the falling-off in mental power, one need only turn from the pages of *The Etonian* of 1820 and 1821 to a little book published, and much praised, in 1877, *A Day of my Life at Eton*, and the comparative silliness and vacuity of later Eton life will be apparent. It was the purpose of *The Adventurer* to redress, in some measure, the balance.

Among the earlier contributors there was one writer in particular, "C. C. T." (C. C. Thornton), whose poetry reached a remarkably high standard for that of a schoolboy; but in 1871, at the time when I was connected with the magazine, its editor was my friend Arthur Tilley, who distinguished himself at Eton by winning both the Newcastle (classical) and the Tomline (mathematical) scholarships, and who was second in the Classical Tripos at Cambridge in 1875. As giving some account of the contributors to the school journal of that period, I can hardly do better than quote from an unsigned poem which appeared in No. 20, entitled "Adventurer loquitur," in which the Magazine was represented as itself indicating and appraising certain members of its staff; and in view of the fact that wellnigh sixty years have passed since that time, I hope I shall not be guilty of an indiscretion if I mention that the author of the verses was my school-fellow, J. E. C. Welldon, since famous as Headmaster of Harrow and Dean of Durham.

The occasion of the poem was *The Adventurer's* natal day, when it was presenting its readers with "a sumptuous feast at but six pence a head." What more natural, then, that it should give them some information concerning the cooks by whom its dainties were prepared? In such a list the editor very properly was made to lead the way.

"First and foremost he
Claims notice, unto whose supreme decree
All others yield. E'en at this early age
His nascent beard proclaims the rising sage.
. . . . . .
Mark how his brow with indignation lowers,
As dish succeeds to dish, and he can brook
No one receipt, that mighty master-cook."

Next comes a reference to another lifelong friend of mine, R. C. Radcliffe, then captain of the school, whose remissness in writing for *The Adventurer*, as contrasted with his many other activities, is gently reproved. His will it is:

"At present, by authoritative rule,
To cure not pork, but evils in the school."

Eight lines are then devoted to the present writer, who had recently contributed to the pages of *The Adventurer* a poem entitled "The Sacrifice."

"What shall I say of him whose very name
Seasons our dishes? He it is whose fame
Rests on 'The Sacrifice,' but those who try
May find there marks of *sales attici*.
He might become a poet, would he wear
Long nails and dirty clothes and unkempt hair;
He might be called a wag, but that he seems
To utter even jokes in wakeful dreams."

I trust the reader will understand that I did *not* become a poet—of the type which the satirist had in mind.

Lord Coleridge, then Bernard Coleridge, is glanced at as a recent winner of the Walking Race, and Mr. C. C. Lacaita is mentioned as one

" Whose patronymic title
Troubles reporters, printers, scribes, no little.
I wish he'd trouble mine a little more
For at his constant negligence I'm sore."

To himself the future Dean of Durham made but a brief allusion in only one of his many capacities, that of a football player : and that in conjunction with his friend (and my friend) E. C. Selwyn, afterwards Headmaster of Uppingham School :

" Go, ye defaulters ! Let me speak of two
Servants far more obedient than you :
When cooks consult, they're ever at the meet :
The one is he who loves with sturdy feet
To drive the flying ball ; always ' Behind '
When to the fore : the other he whose mind,
And not his body, has a Grecian bend,
Known in examinations without end."

As far as examinations were concerned, what was true of Selwyn, might not less justly have been said of Welldon himself.

A number of somewhat sentimental poems had appeared in *The Adventurer* under the nom-de-plume of " Tom " ; these were written by Lord Latymer, who died a few years ago, and who had been known at Eton as F. B. Money (afterwards Money-Coutts). It was to him that the following lines made reference :

" Oh maidens, to whose willing ears there come
All words of love, ye will remember ' Tom.'
Ye know how oft his verse enchains your eyes ;
Ye know how oft imagination tries
To picture him—an interesting lad,
With pale blue eyes, rough hair, and visage sad ;
A little subject to insanity.

If this be so, I say you vainly try
To gain a right impression ; so be calm :
Be sure the knowledge won't destroy the charm."

If my recollection be true, the last line was rather less flattering when it left the satirist's hands than when it appeared in print ; it had, in fact, to be amended to meet the approval of " that mighty master-cook," the editor.

One more, and not the least important, of the young lions of *The Adventurer* remains to be named. He was George Campbell Macaulay, a great friend of mine, and, as I look back across the gulf of so many years, I think the most brilliant, if perhaps the most erratic, of all my friends, though I do not entirely endorse the strictures here passed on him :

" One who might be a Byron, did he know it,
For he has all his faults, though not a poet.
A child of wandering thought and fickle mind,
Fit for all things to which is he inclined,
Though he inclines to little, save his will :
Bad boy, with all his faults, I love him still."

We *all* loved him still. It was with him, when we were boys at Eton, that I had a wager, and won it, as to who could hoax *The Field* more egregiously with a description of seeing a rare bird. I told the story in my *Seventy Years among Savages ;* and was interested to learn from Miss Rose Macaulay, the daughter of my old friend, that she had heard it from her father. The editor of *The Field* was so good as to look up the back numbers of his paper, where he duly found the

account of the supposed "Stork in Windsor Park," with his editorial predecessor's satisfactory verdict: "Most probably it *was* a stork." I must own, with shame, that it was *not* a stork. I once told Mr. W. H. Hudson of this attempt to make Natural History, and I thought he looked rather grave.

George Macaulay succeeded Arthur Tilley as editor of the school magazine, but got his journal into some trouble through an article of his own writing, in which a rather unflattering picture was drawn of "Eton as it is," and the conclusion was reached that "while in the world around us, for which we are here preparing ourselves, a vast worship of intellect universally prevails, at Eton it is the worship of the body which enslaves the whole community." In a subsequent essay "A Sop to Cerberus," he made things rather worse: in fact, the decline of *The Adventurer*, and its subsequent decease, may be dated from the number in which that outrage was done to Etonian sentiment. In one letter of protest that he printed, an angry writer surmised that the critic of Eton must "have failed in one or all of those branches of athletics which he so violently abused." This was an unfortunate assumption; for Macaulay was winner of the school quarter-mile, high-jump, broad-jump, and the throwing of the stone and of the hammer. But the die was cast; and to his lot it fell to write the article "Valete Etonenses," wherewith *The Adventurer* brought its career to

a close. "Finally," he wrote, "we remind our school-fellows that it is only those who truly love Eton that dare to shew her her faults." An admirable sentiment, but one that is not always appreciated to the extent that it deserves!

After taking his degree at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1876, Macaulay was an assistant master at Rugby for some ten years, and afterwards held a lectureship in English at Cambridge University. His comparatively early death was a great grief to his friends. Of all contributors to *The Adventurer*, his was, in my opinion, the most adventurous spirit.

XIV

WILLIAM JOHNSON (CORY)

MUCH has been written about William Johnson, afterwards known as William Cory, author of *Ionica*, the most original, perhaps the oddest of Eton masters, and by common consent the greatest teacher that Eton has produced. To be in his division, or "up to Billy Johnson," as we expressed it, was somewhat of an adventure; for if he took a fancy to a boy, or thought him worth attention, he spared no pains to improve his scholarship; the dull and idle, on the other hand, he quelled with a sort of contemptuous neglect. Thus, while some got little or nothing from him, others (and I speak from experience) learnt more while in his division than during all the rest of their time at Eton. But I think we all rather dreaded him in certain of his moods; for he had a queer short-sighted way of intently regarding us, which caused a feeling of discomfort, and he could address us in terse, biting epigrams against which even the most hardened offender had no shield.[1]

It was rather surprising that a "myope" (as

[1] See the references to William Johnson in Brinsley-Richards' *Seven Years at Eton*, where he is described as "a gentle cynic,

he called himself in one of his letters) was able to maintain good discipline; for as he sat at his desk he was compelled to hold his book within a few inches of his eyes, and there was a legend current among us that once, on a windy day, he had pursued a hen down Windsor Hill, under the belief that she was his own lost hat. Not a few equally strange anecdotes were related of him. I have myself a recollection of seeing him standing motionless in School Yard, apparently quite unconscious of observers or passers-by, and wrapped in some profound day-dream; and I have often regretted the loss of a photograph which I bought when an Eton boy, in which he figured in Turkish Bath costume, and steeped, as it seemed, in an Oriental tranquillity and repose. But the whims of *Ionicus*, as he has rather aptly been called, were many and variable; and to understand them all was as difficult as the problem propounded by Virgil:

Nosse quot Ionii veniant ad litora fluctus.[1]

His antipathies, like his sympathies, were very marked. Archæology, it appeared, was not a favourite study with him: for it is said that happening to be on a visit to the Harrow cricket-field one afternoon in a very hot summer, when

rather out of his place among boys, for a great many of his quaintly humorous sayings, audacious paradoxes, and bitter jibes were lost upon them."

[1] Which may be translated:
"To count the Ionian waves that shoreward roll."

the ground was traversed by deep cracks, he dropped a coin into one of the fissures, with the remark that "some damned fool will perhaps discover it a few ages hence."

Yet, as those who knew him well were aware, and as a volume of his *Letters and Journals*, privately printed in 1897, has since abundantly proved, his exterior oddity of manner was but the cloak of a very tender nature. He loved Eton, and he loved his pupils, and many a man well-known in the world of politics and literature has had a grateful recollection of what he owed to William Johnson at Eton. Take, for example, as a proof—one among many—of his innate genius for teaching, this sentence from one of his latest diaries, written when he was old and ill and unhappy :

"If I were paralysed, I would still do homage to the simple sweetness of good boyhood."

One of the queerest things about this bent, short-sighted man, so entirely unwarlike in his personal appearance, was a great love of the study of war, revealed in many of his letters, and a wide knowledge of military science. His patriotism had in it something of the Jingo element.[1] When

[1] It is rather strange that such sedentary folk as schoolmasters, from Tyrtæus to the present time, should so often have been bellicose. A well-known science master at Eton, Mr. H. G. Madan, once confided to me his opinion that what this country most needed was "a big war, and a good licking." There is evidently a charm in fighting by proxy—even in being defeated by proxy—which is not shared by those who go to the front in person.

a detachment from the Windsor garrison marched down the Eton High Street, with colours flying and band playing, he would rise in his pupil-room and cry to the small boys assembled there : " Brats : the British Army ! "

I was told that one of his red-coated heroes once came to him with a complaint that an Eton boy had called him " Lobster." Johnson tried to put the case in a pleasant light, by arguing that there was nothing amiss with the name ; indeed *he* thought it was rather a compliment to be called " Lobster " ; he would like to be called " Lobster " himself. At which the soldier, after long eyeing him in astonishment, exclaimed briefly : " Blowed if you ain't a rum 'un ! " Which expressed the general verdict of the school.

These " Lobsters," I may incidentally remark—however glad we might be for them to " step forward " when the drums began to beat—were rather a nuisance at Eton, owing to their *penchant* for making love to housemaids. At a later time, when I was a master, I had the small boarding-house famous once as " Drury's," where the entrance to the pupil-room was next to that which led to the servants' quarters. One day when some " private business," as a tutor's work was called, was proceeding, a soldier stepped briskly into the room, and then, finding himself in the presence of a number of boys, stood by the door looking rather dazed. Guessing that he, too, was on

private business of his own, and had mistaken the entrance, I asked him what he wanted. He stammered out, "I've come to see my sister." When I inquired her name, he looked exceedingly troubled, was silent for some time, and then said slowly: "I forget." Needless to say, this little interlude was much appreciated by my pupils.

I had the good fortune to spend a whole year—three "school-times"—in Division III, then taken by Johnson, and I have never forgotten the remarkable power which he had of arresting, and keeping, the attention of schoolboys, that is, of the most fickle and volatile of audiences. I had previously been "up to" St. John Thackery, a learned man, whose class, owing to his inability to maintain order, was merely a bear-garden; to E. D. Stone, another great scholar, and a good teacher as well; to C. C. James ("Stiggins") who was a drill-sergeant and little more; and to Russell Day, who as an epigrammatist was even more famous than Johnson himself. But never before had I seen a schoolmaster who had so rare a faculty for teaching; and never afterwards during the years I spent at Eton, whether as boy or master, did I see or hear of another. I think there was hardly exaggeration in what Oscar Browning wrote to me many years afterwards: "William Johnson, my old tutor, was in my opinion, the greatest genius who ever devoted himself to the education of youth."

Let me give two instances, from my personal recollections, of the way in which he could encourage or rebuke. I remember an occasion when his division had for " saying lesson " a long passage of the " Ajax," and it fell to my lot to be the last to " say."

As I stood beside his desk he appeared to have forgotten me wholly, and to be plunged with bowed head in some grave meditation ; he gave me no instructions where to begin or where to stop. As it happened, I knew the passage perfectly, so I went on from line to line, wondering whether he was at all conscious of my presence, until I had repeated the whole lesson, some eighty lines or more, from beginning to end ; and then, to my astonishment, he turned to me with most sympathetic interest, and after a complimentary reference to my rendering of the " Ajax," entered on a long and kindly talk about my prospects. He also lent me some of his manuscript notebooks, in which were discussed various matters relating to school life.

But lest I should be thought to be flattering myself by this too favourable reminiscence, let me relate another incident of a less happy kind. At a later date I was a member of a Political Economy class, to which Johnson used to lecture, and he soon discovered that I was taking no interest in the work. One day, when I had come in late, and was making my way to my seat as stealthily as possible, I became aware that he was fixing

me with a look of resentful disgust. "You've pretty well established *your* insignificance," were all the words he said, but they are remembered after nearly sixty years.

It will readily be understood that an eccentric like Johnson, always unaccountable in his habits, and often imprudent in his speech, was not wholly understood or appreciated by the majority of his colleagues, at a public school where unorthodoxy of any sort was religiously frowned upon. There was a clique at Eton which regarded him, somewhat as they did Oscar Browning, as a menace to the respectable uniformity of the school life ; but his position as one of the senior masters, his high reputation for scholarship, and his possession of a very formidable gift of mordant speech,[1] made him secure against overt criticism or attack. Yet it was fated that he, too, should be compelled to disappear from a place of which he was one of the chief ornaments, and to which in his own peculiar way he was devotedly attached ; a blow which was quite unforeseen at the time when it fell, and the origin of which has remained something of a mystery. Imagine the surprise of Eton, when at the beginning of a new school-time, it was discovered that William Johnson "had left." The reason given, that it was a sudden whim on the part of so capricious a man, was the best that could

[1] One of his victims was the red-bearded "Stiggins," most disliked of all Eton masters, at whom was aimed a sentence in one of Johnson's Latin exercise books : "Formerly wise men used to grow beards. Now other persons do so."

be alleged in the absence of any definite statement ; but it hardly accorded with the facts.

The explanation of the catastrophe given by Mr. A. C. Benson in his Introduction to *Ionica* (1905), that Johnson " began to feel his strength unequal to the demands upon it, and made a sudden resolution to retire," was more remarkable for its kindliness than its accuracy. But perhaps Mr. Benson did not know the real reason, which was that an indiscreet letter which Johnson had written to a pupil was brought to the notice of Dr. Hornby. After more than half a century, why should a figment be maintained ? Johnson was a remarkable man, great enough in his reputation to dispense with decorous pretences ; and those who knew him personally, and were aware of his high qualities, and essential goodness, cannot but wonder whether, if Eton had then had a wise and strong Headmaster, so great a loss to the school might not have been averted. However that may be, the cause of his departure belonged to a subject which might perhaps be less of a difficulty at schools (and elsewhere), if it were frankly faced,[1] instead of being shirked and evaded under a cloud of secrecy and platitudes.

The tie with Eton once broken, he seemed determined to reverse the whole tenor of his life : he resigned his fellowship at King's College, Cambridge ; he changed his name from Johnson to Cory ; and he retired to live first in the depths

[1] As in the writings of Edward Carpenter.

of Devonshire, and then abroad, where he married. In 1892 he returned to England, and lived for his remaining ten years in Hampstead, where he occupied himself in literature—he wrote a *Guide to Modern English History*—and in teaching Greek to a class of girls. His diaries and letters show him a broken and disheartened man ; yet the old epigrammatic power was still present in much of what he said and wrote. Only a month before his death, in declining a friend's invitation on the score of the heart disease from which he suffered, he thus characteristically expressed himself : " I think it unmannerly to drop down dead in another man's grounds."

Mr. Benson finds in William Johnson a deeply pathetic figure, " because his great gifts and high qualities never had full scope." I should rather be inclined to attribute the sense of disappointment, which undoubtedly shadowed his life, to the fact that he attached himself neither to the old mode of thought nor to the new.

Like his own " Mimnermus in Church," he was a man out of place ; for while he was naturally original and radical in thought, he was to the last swayed, in his views on politics and sociology, by a sentimental Whiggism which crippled his intellectual force. Too keen a wit to acquiesce thoroughly in the old order of things, such as was dominant at Eton, he was yet too conservative to embrace the new ideas ; accordingly, like his friend Lord Rosebery, to whom several of his

published letters are addressed, he ploughed a lonely furrow.

It is curious now to remember that he was looked upon at Eton as a daring thinker and an innovator of an almost dangerous sort. We have travelled far since those days, and now see him as politically and socially old-fashioned, no more formidable than a philosophic Whig, though his personal originality showed itself in the keenness of his wit, and in the very striking beauty of some of the lyrics in *Ionica*. But even in literary questions he was out of touch with modern thought. Tennyson was for him the English Virgil. "I cannot say," he wrote, "that he is greater than Homer, but he fills my soul, and makes the best part of the forty years of manhood that I have gone through." That is odd enough, but is quite eclipsed by his verdict that Campbell would outlive Shelley, the "tautology and insincerity" of whose rhymed poetry disgusted him, though the blank verse he could "endure cheerfully." He "would rather correct Fourth Form exercises than read four whole volumes of Shelley's rhymes." If this is not antediluvian, what is ?

But this eccentric old scholar, whether we know him by the name of Johnson or of Cory, deserves to be remembered with honour and gratitude, not only as a teacher of genius, but as *Ionicus*, the author of that very graceful, albeit slight, volume of verse, which has set more than one reviewer quoting such gems as "Heraclitus," perhaps the

most felicitous rendering of a Greek lyric that Englishman ever made :

" They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead,
They brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed.
I wept, as I remembered how often you and I
Had tired the sun with talking and sent him down the sky.
And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest,
A handful of grey ashes, long, long ago at rest,
Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales, awake ;
For Death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take."

The volume of Cory's Letters which Lord Esher published under the title *Ionicus*, in 1923, is hardly so interesting as the *Letters and Journals* of 1897 : some of the letters are characteristically reckless, and not of the sort that a wise teacher would indite.

XV

SWINBURNE'S TUTOR

IN his book entitled *Memories and Friends*, which is largely concerned with Eton, Mr. A. C. Benson told the story of an unsuccessful attempt which he once made to obtain some information from the Rev. J. L. Joynes, then Lower Master of Eton, and known familiarly as "Old Joynes," about the schooldays of the poet Swinburne, who had been his pupil and in his House. "He seemed to be able to recollect nothing," said Mr. Benson, "except that Swinburne had red hair. When I mentioned his poetry, he changed the subject decisively, with obvious disapproval."

It happens that I can throw some light on this subject, as Mr. Joynes was my father-in-law, and I more than once heard him tell some good stories about Swinburne, though on the occasion referred to he seems to have been unwilling to be "drawn," doubtless because he saw that Mr. Benson was in quest of "copy." He was rather skilful at "changing the subject," when it approached dangerous ground, and Swinburne's poetry (which he had not read) was regarded by him with grave suspicion, owing to something that

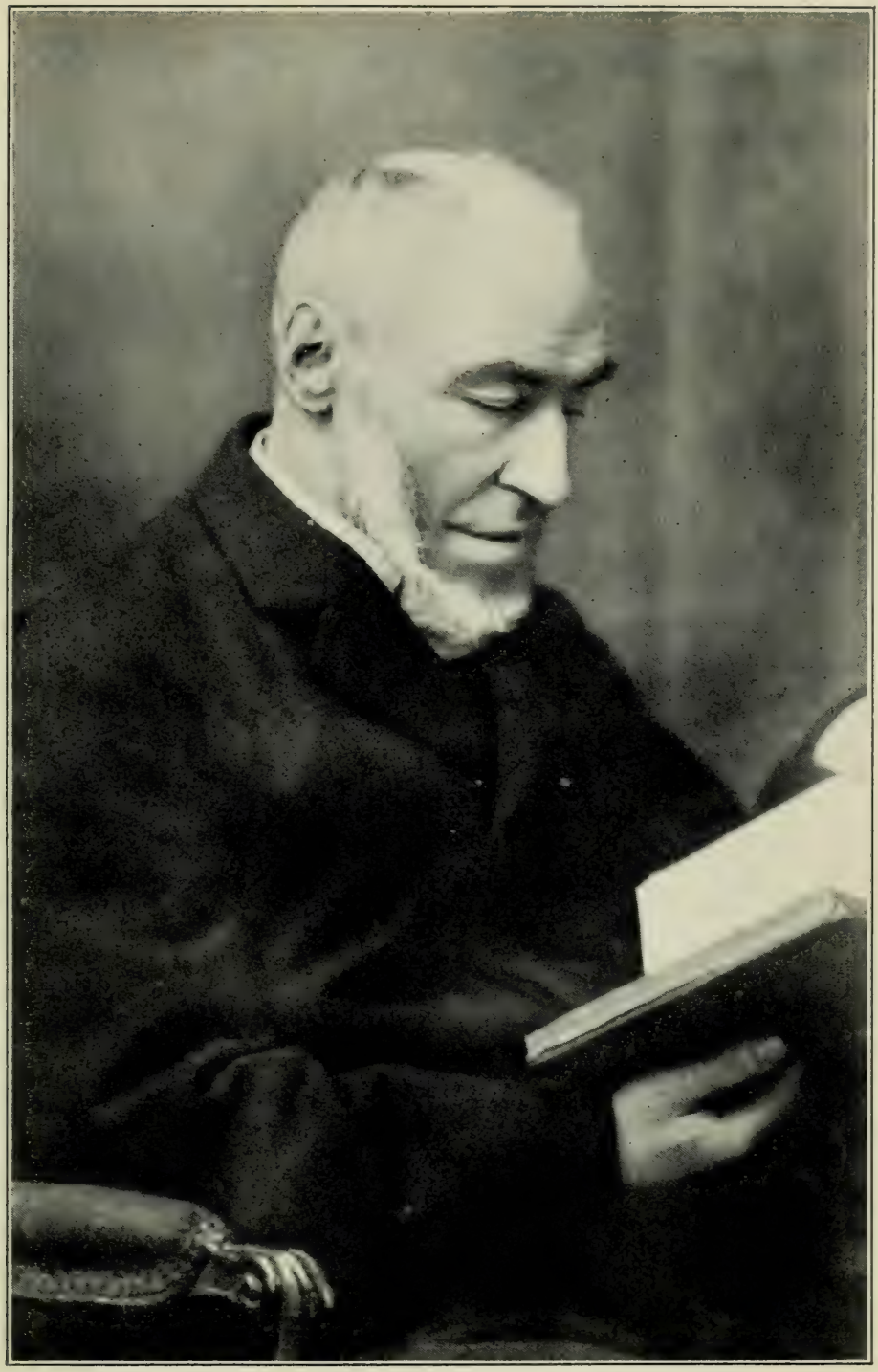
had been said by his colleague, William Johnson, of whom I have already spoken.[1]

When *Atalanta in Calydon* was published, twelve years after he had left Eton, Swinburne sent his old tutor a beautifully bound copy of the book; but Mr. Joynes's gratification at the present was rather dashed by Johnson's shouting to him, at a chance meeting: "I say, Joynes, have you heard that your pupil Swinburne has written a most godless poem?" This, it seems, made the task of suitably acknowledging the gift a very embarrassing one for a deeply religious man; but in later years, when he was in the mood for it, Swinburne's tutor would talk freely, not about his pupil's poetry, but of his adventures as an Eton boy.

The assertion has been made in the *Eton College Chronicle* and repeated in Sir E. Gosse's Life of the poet, that Swinburne, in his schooldays at Eton, was not teased and "hunted" as Shelley was. "The truth about the boy Swinburne," said the writer in the *Chronicle*, "is that he was a recluse, left alone at Eton to enjoy the wholesome neglect which best attends the chrysalis stage of a poet's first studies."

I am afraid this picture is rather too complimentary to the tolerance of Eton boys, for it is

[1] At a somewhat later date I had the pleasure, not unmixed with anxiety, of introducing Mr. Bernard Shaw to the Rev. J. L. Joynes, by whom G.B.S.'s writings were viewed with as deep a suspicion as were those of his own pupil, Swinburne. After the interview was concluded, I remarked to Shaw that we had got through better than might have been expected. "Got through!" he cried. "Why, he loves me as his own son."



THE REV. J. L. JOYNES
Swinburne's Tutor

a fact that the poet's eccentricities caused him to be much worried by his school-fellows. On one occasion he came in an agitated state to his tutor and asked to be excused going into school, as he could not face "those dreadful boys." "Oh, sir," he cried, "they wear tailcoats! Sir, they are men!" The request was refused; but his tutor soothed him by reading a Psalm, and with that aid he went forth to meet his tormentors.[1]

It was remembered that the poet's grammar was bad, though he had a great aptitude for Greek. On one occasion he translated a Greek chorus into Latin Alcaics; on another, when his division had to compose English verses, his were by far the best, but so badly written that he was ordered to copy them again. Mr. Joynes recollected the great zest with which Swinburne read out, at "construing," the Virgilian line,

Jura magistratusque legunt sanctumque senatum.

Severe restriction was put on the scope of the boy's reading, both at home and at school; and among the prohibited authors were Byron and Shelley. There was, however, a set of the old dramatists in the house, and to these, especially to Ford's works, he eagerly begged to be allowed access. His tutor, not being versed in Ford, referred the matter to another Eton master, Mr. Cookesley, who had the local reputation of omniscience, and the decision was that Ford's

[1] This and one or two other incidents were mentioned in my *Seventy Years among Savages*, but they will bear re-telling as incorrect versions have been widely circulated.

plays might be read, except one, *'Tis Pity she's a Whore;* but this, as it turned out, was among those with which the young student most desired to make acquaintance.

I once rescued from destruction some pages of an old notebook, formerly kept in Mr. Joynes's house library, in which were written the boys' names and the titles of the books taken out by them. There were about a dozen entries concerning Swinburne (1850–1853), the works selected by him including *Old Plays, Corpus Poetarum Latinorum, The Archarnians,* etc.

It has been said by J. W. Mackail that Swinburne "in the expression of his opinions, was congenitally incapable of measured or tempered statement." Here is a story of the poet's boyhood, which may be taken as typical of the want of restraint that characterized him. He had once an illness when at Eton, and his mother, Lady Jane Swinburne, who had come to be with him there, was beguiling the hours by reading his beloved Shakespeare to him as he lay in bed. She left the room for a time, and her maid undertook to act as deputy-reader in her absence, but had not read many lines before Swinburne, infuriated by the outrage done to the sacred text, dashed into her face a glass of water,[1] which was standing by the bedside. That maid, I imagine, would have been inclined to agree with Mr.

[1] Not, be it noted, "a pot of jam," as Swinburne's biographer has it. Even the youthful poet did not use such heavy missiles as that.

Mackail's opinion that "over-emphasis" was one of Swinburne's failings. Thus early did he vindicate his love of art at the expense of his power of self-control.

From the anecdotes which I have related, it will be seen that Mr. Joynes remembered something more of his pupil than he had red hair. He always spoke affectionately of Swinburne: and once, years later, when I enjoyed Mr. Watts-Dunton's hospitality, the poet made many most friendly inquiries about his "dear old tutor."

Swinburne's tutor was far less simple than Mr. Benson supposed; his seeming innocence was a sort of protective colouring. I used to try to persuade him to write some reminiscences of his long experience at Eton, but this he was unwilling to do, and alleged, as a reason for his refusal, an unfortunate remark made by myself in a magazine article, where I had spoken disparagingly of authors who, for lack of anything better to do, "cumber the world with translations of Horace, or dissertations on art, or volumes of travels, or that last indignity, their own reminiscences."[1] Of the sense of humour he was by no means devoid. I remember his telling us one day, when he had been up Windsor, that a tout on the hill, mistaking him for a visitor, had asked whether he wanted a guide to the Castle. At this he lost his temper for a moment, and said: "My good fellow, do you know I have lived here thirty

[1] And now I am doing so myself!

years ?" The retort came promptly: "Time you were out of it, sir"; "at which," said Mr. Joynes, "I was so pleased that I gave him a shilling."

On another occasion he met a lady of uncertain age, who cried to him: "Congratulate me, Mr. Joynes; I'm sixty to-day." He told me that for one dreadful moment he hesitated, and feared she might have noticed it; but then, happily remembering that she kept a girls' school, and that it was to the number of her pupils that she alluded, he managed to make the suitable reply.

In later life, like many old people, especially retired schoolmasters, he became rather subject to nervous fears and apprehensions. I remember how on one occasion he suddenly put down the newspaper he was reading and asked in a tone of deep anxiety, "Where's Newry?" We parried that geographical question by inquiring what had happened at Newry; upon which he told us with still greater gravity: "There's a Bear loose there." When it was discovered that we had the Irish Channel between us and the escaped animal, he was sensibly relieved.

Among other Eton pupils of Mr. Joynes's were Sir George Young, Sidney Herbert, Crauford Tait, the Marquis of Lorne, Lord Kinnaird, Quintin Hogg, and Mr. H. E. Luxmoore. To some readers it may seem strange that an Eton tutor, even sixty years ago, should have fought shy of a poem written by a very distinguished pupil. But

let them remember that it is of a bygone Eton that I am speaking; and that Mr. Joynes's attitude was one that was not uncommon among the masters at that time, when authors were all liable to be looked upon with suspicion, and heretic writers with a much stronger feeling. Eton had not then recovered from the grievous fact that Shelley had been an Etonian. When Mr. Oscar Browning proposed that a bust of the poet should be placed in the Upper School, Dr. Goodford had refused his consent, and had stated his emphatic conviction that Shelley was "a bad man," a memorable saying which, by an error that I regret, I have once or twice attributed to Dr. Hornby. But who was it that expressed a pious wish that Shelley, like Byron, had been educated "in another place," in a word, had wished him—"at Harrow"? *That* remark, I cannot but think, must have come from a livelier humour than "the Cogger's." There is the true Hornby touch in it.

Gray, was of course, the "safe" poet, the recognized Eton Laureate, and his works, in a single large volume, formed the official "leaving book," of which a copy was given by the Headmaster to every boy on his departure. That was as it should be; for the "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" is a fine poem of which every Etonian may feel proud. It is the Shelleys and the Swinburnes who have to fight their way through infamy to fame.

XVI

VIRGIL THE BELOVED

WILLIAM JOHNSON, as Mr. A. C. Benson wrote in his Introduction to *Ionica*, loved Virgil as a friend. I had done so, even before I went to the school; but at Eton, half a century ago, Virgil was not a household word as Horace was: we read parts of the Æneid and of the Georgics, but without much illumination; indeed, "a Georgic" suggested to most minds little more than the copying of over five hundred lines, a penalty which occasionally fell to our lot. I remember, in a Fifth Form division, the Rev. E. D. Stone, a fine scholar, reading aloud to us Conington's version of the Sixth Book of the Æneid, and how irreverently we laughed at the translator's description of the golden bough that formed Æneas's credentials in the descent to Hades:

> "Yet none may reach the Shades without
> The passport of that golden sprout."

But the beauties of Virgil were rarely, if ever, pointed out to us; and there was some justification for a remark of Lord Coleridge's, who was at Eton at the same time as myself and in the same

pupil-room, that " no attempt was made by any master I was ever up to in school to instil any love into our minds of the noble literature we were reading."[1] For it hardly constituted an exception to tell us, as good old Wolley-Dod did, in his large and lazy way, that the wonderful passage about Camilla, at the end of the seventh book, was " very pretty."

During the year that I was in Johnson's division I think we did not read much Virgil ; else from him we might have heard something worth attention about the wonders of the Virgilian verse, its structure and rhythm, its subtleties of elision and cæsura. From Dr. Hornby, in Sixth Form, we learnt little on these points, but just read and construed some book of the Æneid, and were told what the scholiasts had said about the more difficult passages. When discussing our Latin verses, if they were hexameters, the Headmaster told us that we should frame them on the model of Virgil, rather than of Ovid ; which was true enough, but, unfortunately, he did not proceed to indicate the salient features of Virgil's art, though here a slight hint or two might easily have set us on the track, for unconsciously we felt, even then, the charm of the Virgilian cadences.

The only remark on the subject that I ever heard at Eton was from a very talented schoolfellow, C. C. Thornton, who drew my

[1] *This for Remembrance.* (1925.)

attention to the beauty of the cæsura in Eclogue IX, 60 :

Sepulcrum
Incipit apparere Bianoris.

Again, the " saying lessons " in Virgil might have been of great service to us if we had been made to learn them thoroughly ; for to know by heart a fine poem, or passage of a poem, is an acquisition of lasting value ; as it was, we were allowed to slip through week by week, with an imperfect knowledge of our sixty or seventy lines, and by the end of the term we had practically forgotten the whole. It was not until I had left Eton that I began to understand Virgil, though I had always loved him, and, with an increased sense of the marvellous melody of his diction, to see how in the tenderness of his sympathies and psychological insight he anticipated, like Lucretius, some of the most advanced modern feeling.

Horace, on the other hand, was always popular in the school, in so far as any classic might be ; and it was a sort of tradition to know something of him. Moultrie recorded in his autobiographical poem how he had been moved by one of the Odes :

. . . " I loved
('Twas the first poetry I ever *felt*)
That ode of Horace which relates the doom
Of Hypermnestra, daring bonds and death
For her young bridegroom's sake."

The Satires and Epistles, too, gave occasion for pleasantries as few other school-books did ; and

even the stiff and formal C. C. James would relax at such times, and crack one of his rather forced jokes with his division. *Sapere aude.* "Dare to be a sap." But a "sap," *puer sapiens*, was a rare phenomenon in the Eton of those days: of *puer insipiens* there was plenty.

I wish we had read more Ovid. It was traditional in the Fourth Form to read "short Ovid"; but higher in the school he was almost neglected, and the "Metamorphoses" was in my time a book unknown to us. This was the more strange, as far as the elegiacs, "longs and shorts," were concerned, because our perennial Latin verse composition was supposed to take Ovid as its model.

Again, it was a mistake, I must think, to read the Classics through extracts and selections as much as we did in those days, especially in the upper divisions; for though there may be certain advantages to masters in that course, not only for those who edit the anthologies, but also by the elimination of awkward passages which in the full text have either to be construed or passed over, and if passed over attract only the greater attention from the boys, the snippet-system of reading is even more deleterious in literature than in journalism. In the case of some dangerous authors, Lucretius, or Catullus, for instance, I suppose it was necessary; but the result of Dr. Hornby's large use of the Rev. F. St. John Thackeray's *Anthologia Græca* was that many a

Sixth Form boy left Eton, as I did, with very fragmentary knowledge of the writers he was supposed to have been reading, a deficiency, for which later years had to atone. It seems strange, too, that while the writing of Latin verses was a regular weekly task, the translation of a passage of Virgil or Horace into English verse was a thing unheard of ;[1] though in the last week of a boy's time at Eton an English "Vale" was permitted. Yet there were some of us to whom an occasional exercise of the sort would have been of the utmost value. I remember the pleasure, at a still earlier date, of translating some lines from one of the Georgics for Mr. Kegan Paul, at whose private school in Dorsetshire I was prepared for Eton.

I have called Virgil the "Beloved" because the true and broad humanity of the poet makes itself felt in so many passages of his Æneid, and still more perhaps of the peaceful and pastoral Georgics. That an extraordinary number of his lines have become proverbial and lasting possessions of mankind testifies to his deep hold on the affections ; take, for example, that splendid sentiment put into the mouth of Dido :

Non ignara mali miseris succurrere disco.

Not Wordsworth himself, who, above all other modern poets, had "kept watch o'er man's

[1] In our time ; but it seems to have been not unknown at a somewhat earlier date. See the reference to Swinburne, p.125.

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mortality," could have more feelingly expressed the sense of brotherhood in suffering. Nor was it only in regard to the human race that Virgil's sensibilities were so deep. It must be remembered, of course, that the age in which he lived, and still more the earlier age of which he wrote, was much less compassionate than our own, as far as the sufferings of animals are concerned; and there are necessarily frequent references to practices of a barbarous kind. Yet there are also passages, here and there, both in the Georgics and in the Æneid, which might seem to have been written by some humanitarian poet of the eighteenth century or later, and show a tenderness far exceeding that of the ordinary Christian conscience. The lines, for example, in which Orpheus, mourning for the twice-lost Eurydice, is likened to the nightingale whose unfledged young have been stolen from the nest, are no mere poetic image, but full, if ever words reflected feelings, of the truest sympathy and understanding.

To say that Virgil showed a tenderness "in advance of his age" falls far short of the truth; for some of his sentiments are much in advance of the average morality of our enlightened twentieth century. It is doubtless this humane quality, in conjunction with the transcendent charm of his style and rhythm, that has caused him to be loved as few writers have been by generations of grateful readers, and still makes us feel toward him as to no other poet of antiquity.

He is not merely a great poet of nature; he is a great poet of the human heart.

Fifty years after I had left Eton I "showed up" (to use the old term) to my friend and former tutor, Frank Warre-Cornish, then Vice-Provost, a small volume of translations from Lucretius in verse, and asked to be "looked over" once more, as so often in days that were long past. I hoped I might get such a mark, perhaps, as p.f. (pretty fair), or even, if I were fortunate, "well." His written comment was: "You have not translated Lucretius, but you have come very near it." This gratified me; for who *could* translate Lucretius?

For that matter, who can translate Virgil? Yet each generation has to make the attempt; and I often have wished that William Johnson had been one of the adventurers. And now, rushing in where my betters feared to tread, I am myself publishing a verse rendering of the Æneid, upon which I have been engaged, off and on, for I dare not say how many years.

XVII

IN A BISHOP'S PALACE[1]

WHEN I was in my last year at Eton, as a Sixth Form boy, I received to my surprise an invitation, or perhaps it should be called a command, to dine at the Provost's Lodge ; and on the evening in question (it was the one when, as I have already related, prayers were disastrously read in College by the Rev. " Judy " Durnford) I learnt from Dr. Goodford that I was to go to Lichfield during the Easter holidays to act as tutor to the nephew of the bishop, Dr. George Augustus Selwyn, then famous for his missionary labours in New Zealand, and as the foremost champion of " muscular Christianity." I would much have preferred to enjoy my holidays in the usual way on the Shropshire hills, but I was in no degree consulted. The Provost took my consent as a matter of course, and my relatives applauded the appointment with a fervency which left me no hope of escape ; indeed, it was almost the only event in my life which brought me unqualified approval in that quarter.

Congratulations, not unmingled with advice,

[1] Reprinted from the *Literary Guide*.

now began to reach me; and pious uncles and aunts, who hitherto had not seemed to view my career with too indulgent an eye, discovered an affection for me which was almost embarrassing: one wrote of the satisfaction that he felt at knowing I should be "in a bishop's palace," and another impressed on me the importance of always addressing the bishop as "my lord." I had a suspicion, even at that early age, that I could not live up to this standard of propriety, and a dim foresight of a truth, amply tested by me in later years, which Thoreau conveyed in his poem entitled "My Prayer":

> "And next in value, which Thy kindness lends,
> That I may greatly disappoint my friends."

It was with some apprehension that I awaited so novel an experience as this tutorship, and a wish that my friends, as they could not help, would spare me their foolish exhortations, and let me face the ordeal as I could.

It was not so trying as I expected, or at least in the manner which I expected. My pupil, a lower boy in Evans's House at Eton, son of the Lord Justice Selwyn, who had died a year or two before, was a lively young scapegrace; and as our working hours were far from onerous, we rode a good deal about the adjacent country, steering by the spire of the cathedral. I had also a good deal of time to myself. The bishop, himself an enthusiastic Etonian, though rather grim in appearance, and very formidable when his temper

was stirred, had a kind heart, and a sense of humour which greatly relieved the tension of his presence. What I had chiefly dreaded was the society at Lichfield, the visitors, and the dinner-parties; but these, as it turned out, were rather a blessing in disguise, inasmuch as they proved to be an alleviation of the real burden which I had not foreseen, to wit, the rather oppressive sense of piety which brooded over the palace.

The bishop had only lately resigned the See of New Zealand, much against his own inclinations, and in deference to the request of his ecclesiastical superiors; and his talk, like that of Mrs. Selwyn, was mainly of the Maoris and their much-to-be-desired conversion to the Christian religion. It was a dreary subject, to those not engaged in the work; and on me, fresh from the pleasant heathenism of Eton (a place which the bishop regarded, strangely enough, as a fortress of the faith), it had a rather depressing effect.

I cannot think that a scholar and athlete like Bishop Selwyn found in missionary work, as was always assumed, the profession for which he was divinely adapted. It seems to me that in some other and less austere calling he might have been a happier man—as happy, perhaps, as the "heathen" themselves are until their merciless proselytizers take them in charge.

Then the services and prayers! As if the cathedral were not enough, the bishop had added to his palace a private chapel, described by his

biographer as "full of fragrant memories of New Zealand." To me it seemed rather to emulate the atmosphere of the Arctic regions, for it was quite unwarmed, unless by the ardour of the worshippers, and at the evening service we were not encouraged to wear scarves and ulsters over our chilly dress-clothes. I attributed my survival mainly to the warmth of the wine which I had imbibed at the dinner-table—a confession which strict truth demands from an abstainer of long standing.

It has been said by Mr. W. H. Hudson that many persons visiting a certain cathedral city suffer from a deep depression known locally as "the chichesters." In like manner I think I must have been the victim, though I did not understand it at the time, of an attack of "the lichfields." Nor was I the only person thus affected; for I could see that some of the visitors to the palace, however gracefully they concealed it, found the formalities very tedious; and one or two of them, with whom I became acquainted, made frank though secret avowal of the fact. To one, indeed, I could almost have said, in the words of Jessica, had it been seemly thus to speak of a bishop's palace:

> "Our house is hell, and thou, a merry devil,
> Didst rob it of some taste of tediousness."

Dr. Selwyn himself, the centre of the admiring throng, was a great organizer, a great scholar, but not, as was fondly imagined, a great intellect. He

was, in fact, a Conservative of the good old type, not unlike Dr. Warre, Headmaster of Eton at a later date, but differing from him in having a genuine sense of humour which softened the sharp edges of his temper, and served as a fence against what might have become the doting idolatry of his domestic circle. A wit he was not—his jesting was a little too cumbrous—though he was named after the George Augustus Selwyn, his grandfather's cousin, who had enjoyed that reputation. I heard Mrs. Selwyn tell some friends how, when he first met another dignitary of the Church, Dr. Magee, then Bishop of Peterborough, and author of the paradoxical saying, " It's better to be free than sober," they were both rather silent and constrained ; a reticence which she attributed to their mutual consciousness of the great importance of the occasion—the clash of mighty minds. It might have been entertaining to hear the other prelate's opinion as to that.

One member of the household there was, who certainly had not succumbed to the prevalent hero-worship, and that was the butler. He interested me, as having the traditional characteristic of his class—an inscrutable demeanour, indicating nothing more than an anxious desire to serve—to which he added an acute observation which betrayed itself, when opportunity favoured, in penetrating remarks. He clearly regarded the great man as a sort of spoilt child, whose whims and oddities had to be suffered but were thoroughly

understood. Trust a butler to know his bishop rather than a bishop his butler !

That the family genius had been transmitted to the Rev. William Selwyn, the bishop's elder son, was not asserted, even among the clique of pious ladies who acted their part at the palace like the chorus in a Greek play : I have heard, indeed, that among outsiders he was known irreverently as " Silly Billy " ; but that title, as we have seen, was more fitly bestowed elsewhere. With the younger son, John Selwyn,[1] afterwards Bishop of Melanesia, it was quite otherwise : he was an extremely able and kind-hearted fellow, always actively engaged in good deeds, though not, like his father, a classical scholar. I remember his coming to me, with rather a troubled air, to ask the meaning of *ex luce lucellum*, a phrase which was then going the round of the papers, at the time when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, " Bob " Lowe, was proposing a tax on matches.

Such was the family entourage ; none of whom, as may be imagined, showed any signs of being afflicted by what afflicted me, to wit, the intense devotional atmosphere of the place, which made one dread the very mention of missionaries or of Maoris. But there were visitors, as I have said, in whose company I found relaxation, and two of these, strange to say, were sons of the then Primate of New Zealand, young men of about

[1] In the *Dictionary of National Biography* John Selwyn is wrongly described as the only son of the bishop.

my own age, or not much over it, who had a keen eye for the amusing features of life at the palace. In my spare hours we walked and talked together ; in particular I recall an expedition when we visited the cathedral and inspected its edifying monuments, one of my two friends acting the part of lecturer and guide. His method was somewhat unconventional. Mounted on the pedestal of a statue, with one arm thrown familiarly over the shoulder of the good man whose effigy it was, he was just beginning to address us : " Now this old chap . . ." when, to our horror, the verger (or was it the Dean himself ?) came round a corner unexpectedly, and the orator had to make a rapid descent from his perch.

Among the visitors at the palace was a curate named, if I remember rightly, Sweet—at any rate he *was* sweet on a young lady who was staying there and was understood to be betrothed to him. This would in no way have affected me, but for the chance that the bishop, who, with all his energy, was subject to certain small human frailties, habitually confused the curate's name with mine, and addressed me as " Mr. Sweet," and the curate as " Mr. Salt," to the embarrassment of the parties concerned, including the young lady. After such mistakes he would correct himself with a twinkle, as if he rather enjoyed the discomposure he had caused ; and this mischievous tendency in so devout a man was an agreeable offset to his official mood of gravity.

But I thought he carried his humour a little too far, when once, at luncheon, with evidently sportive intent, he asked me to carve a goose which was set at the end of the table, and sat watching my difficulties with a knowing eye.[1]

I was grateful, however, for this humorous faculty on a later occasion, in the summer of the same year, when we were returning to Lichfield from Penmaenmawr, after a week or two at the seaside. The saloon carriage in which we travelled had been shunted at Crewe, in order to be attached to another train ; and as I seemed in some danger of being left behind on the platform, I ran along the line, and finding the doors locked, climbed in, head first, through a window, praying that I might not alight in proximity to the bishop. Of course I made my entry, serpent-like, not two yards from his feet ; but I need not have been apprehensive on that account, for he approved of activity in whatever form it might show itself, decorous or otherwise. He said nothing ; but I can still see what one of his admirers has described as " the dear old half-amused smile on his face."[2]

The last time I saw the bishop was some five

[1] One of the sentences in a Latin exercise book written by William Johnson ran somewhat as follows : " The Goose and I dined together. The Goose was dead ; I was alive. We were both silent." Unfortunately, at Lichfield, the goose and I had company who were *not* silent.

[2] *Bishop Selwyn*, by G. H. Curteis, 1889. Of the bishop's stories the one that I liked best was that in which he told how, in the wilds of New Zealand, he once shared his lunch with a rat, who trustfully took morsel after morsel from his hands.

or six years after my tutorship, when I had returned from Cambridge to Eton as an assistant master. He and Mrs. Selwyn were on a visit to Dr. Goodford at the Provost's Lodge, and I was asked to dinner to meet them. I noticed that evening a lack of cordiality in their manner, which rather surprised me at first ; but I afterwards discovered that this was due to a pious busybody at Shrewsbury, in the bishop's diocese, having told him that I was a heretic, a wolf in the educational fold. So *that* chapter was concluded. I might make up my mind that I was not likely again to see the inside of a bishop's palace ; and such has been my lot during the half-century and more that has passed since the experience of which I have spoken.

But I was once for ten minutes in the company of an Archbishop. I happened to be reading in a well-known library when a prelate of distinguished appearance and benign manner walked in and sat down close to me. An attendant followed, and after taking an order for a book asked in whose name it should be entered. The answer, given with much suavity, was "the Archbishop of Canterbury." The poor man, under the shock of this announcement, staggered out as if his legs could hardly carry him ; and a minute or two later the chief librarian came officiously in, his ambling gait and soapy hand-rubbings indicating his intense desire to be of service. I wondered whether archbishops were everywhere mobbed

in that manner; certainly Dr Benson seemed to take it as quite a matter of course. It was a case not of snobbery merely, but almost of Snobbery with Violence; and as such I think it would have been resented by Dr. G. A. Selwyn.

XVIII

OUR LIBERTIES

MY mention of the Bishop of Peterborough's paradox—that it is "better to be free than sober"—reminds me of a well-rounded phrase that was sometimes used by preachers in the Eton College chapel, "the liberty of this great public school." It was a principle of the Eton system, and in many respects a sound one, that the boys should be allowed a considerable amount of liberty, and not subjected to that close supervision, amounting almost to espionage, which some private schools adopt; and it need not be said that this traditional measure of freedom was highly valued by those to whom it was conceded. We should have been strongly on the side of the bishop, if his maxim had been propounded to us; not that we often abused our liberty, or that the penalties in cases where it was found to have been abused were not sufficiently serious; but certainly our opportunities of obtaining drink were rather generous for schoolboys.

We were allowed beer in moderate quantity at dinner and supper, and in addition to this there was an old institution known as "Bever," by which, on the afternoon of a half-holiday, beer

was set on the table in the College Hall for those who felt in need of it ; this, however, was a bounty of which we seldom availed ourselves, as the games which were usually in full progress at the time were likely to be a more potent attraction. But it seems rather strange that boys should have been thus presumed to be thirsty between dinner and tea-time on a summer afternoon ; and as thirst is so largely a matter of habit, it may be doubted whether it was wise to encourage the habit gratuitously.[1] I once heard a discussion at table d'hote in a Scottish hotel as to the hours of the day or night when a man is most apt to be thirsty. Various opinions were expressed, according to the idiosyncrasies of those present, until the deep voice of an old captain, who took the head of the table, broke in decisively with the announcement : " I'm *always* thirsty." I think my school-fellow Tom ——, of whose exploits I have spoken in an earlier chapter, was developing a similar capacity.

The Sixth Form Collegers, ten in number, had supper in a room apart from the rest ; it was on the ground floor, and had barred windows which looked into Weston's Yard, opposite the house which in those days was the Headmaster's. Those reunions, like the meetings at the tea and breakfast

[1] " It must be admitted that there was a good deal of excess of drinking. . . . Every day big jorums of strong beer were placed on the table in the College Hall, for any Colleger who liked to booze to his heart's content."—From *Memories and Hopes*, by the Rev. and Hon. E. Lyttelton, D.D.

mess, were at all times very pleasant; and on festive occasions, when there was a cricket or football match, and old Etonians had come down, it was the custom to entertain visitors, and hospitality had then to be offered on a rather ampler scale than the ordinary fare permitted. In brief, the table beer that was provided for us in fixed allowance had to be supplemented by something better from outside.

When I first went to Eton, this was usually done by sending one or two fags, small Collegers, in their gowns, to "Tap," a bar which at that time was forbidden. The required supplies were brought in the form of bottled beer, carried by the fags, several bottles by each, in the capacious pockets of their heavy cloth gowns, a job which was extremely troublesome and dangerous, for not only was there the chance of meeting a master in the street, but one had to steer wide of brick walls, house-corners, and all hard substances, including bulky passers-by, for fear of a collision in which a bottle might be broken and the fatal secret betrayed.

I was once sent on such an errand by a member of the Sixth Form, a youth with a prematurely aged face, wrinkled and careworn, who, in the high position that he occupied, maintained an air of moral responsibility like that of a front-bench politician. "Look here," he said, gravely, "I don't approve of your going to Tap"; and he instructed me how to get the beer elsewhere, at

some grocer's or stores that he mentioned. When I returned with the news that it was not to be obtained there, he hesitated for a moment or two, wearing a look of deep concern, and then said with some embarrassment: "Then you must get it at Tap," and from Tap accordingly I fetched it, consoling myself for the perils of the way with a philosophical sentiment which I had heard in a pantomime:

> "But it must be, and what must be must *be*.
> No getting over *that*, it seems to me."

When I was in Sixth Form, a few years later, we did not put this task on a Lower boy, but ordered the beer to be sent direct to Weston's Yard in the late evening, and thence handed in through the bars of the window. I do not know that we ever felt the least anxiety about the fact that the Headmaster, Dr. Hornby, lived just opposite across the yard; nor, which is more strange, can I remember how we disposed of the empty bottles. I think the College servants must have so far connived at our revels as to keep a discreet silence about what they "cleared away," and this was good and disinterested of them, for we certainly did not leave them anything to drink. Such was the freedom which we enjoyed at our Sixth Form suppers, and we might have said, with Lovelace:

> "Fishes that tipple in the deep
> Know no such liberty."

I hope I have now atoned for those orgies by half a century of abstinence; but they were agreeable enough at the time.

Even tutors would at times give rather injudicious hospitality to boys, as when William Johnson, so the story ran, entertained some pupils at supper, and then kicked them downstairs when he saw that they had imbibed too much. But the chief opportunities for testing our liberties in the matter of drink were on such festive occasions as the Fourth of June and Election Saturday, when champagne flowed rather generously, with the result that "hot coppers," and tell-tale inability to attend morning chapel, were not uncommon on the morrow. When one of these untoward accidents occurred, every attempt was made to hush it up and avoid detection; and this leads me to remark that the saying *In vino veritas* seems to have little foundation in fact. It may be that in some rare cases a toper blabs out an inconvenient secret; but far more often he will use every art of evasion to conceal the truth; communicative he may seem, but he is careful not to communicate the fact, however apparent, that he is drunk. Moreover, in view of the large amount of ill-temper that is generated by drink, I would suggest that not *in vino veritas*, but *in vino feritas*, would be the more appropriate maxim.

I remember hearing a small Colleger, who found himself incapacitated on the morning of a

fifth of June, anxiously consulting a benevolent member of the Sixth Form as to his condition. "What am I to do?" he asked; and the veteran, out of the fullness of his experience, answered laconically: "Do? Why, drink soda-water, I suppose." Now, it may have been better for that boy to be free than to be sober; but he did not seem greatly to enjoy the fruits of freedom when he had plucked them. But is not the use of the word "freedom," in this connection, entirely fallacious and misleading? For how can anyone, boy or man, be free, if he is *not* sober? Free in his manners perhaps, but hardly in his movements, for the legs have always been a weak point in the drinker's anatomy.

The mischief of such cryptic sayings as that of the clever Dr. Magee is that, like the oracles of old, they are ambiguous, and together with a truth, apprehended by the few, convey an untruth which is much more likely to be embraced by the many. So it was in the case of that famous epigram. Caught up greedily by the apologists of the drink-trade, it still serves in one form or another as a slogan against Prohibition; yet in the too literal sense in which it is popularly understood it is a palpable absurdity. As some rhymer has it:

> "So hey! for England's glorious rights,
> Free sellin' and free buyin',
> Free libraries, free drinks, free fights,
> And a free ditch to die in."

I was myself disillusioned as regards this form of liberty, while still a Sixth Form boy at Eton ; for at a dinner in the College Hall, after the conclusion of the Winchester cricket match, when wine was circulating freely, " with no allaying Thames," I had the misfortune to take a glass or two of brown sherry more than was good for me, and as I walked back through School Yard to my room in College, I was compelled to recognize that I had sensations which I had never experienced before ; and though I was soon able to subdue them, they left me with the conviction, not perhaps fully understood at the time, but none the less an abiding one, that if *that* was freedom, it was better to be sober than free.

XIX

FROM BOY TO MASTER

IT was a singularly flattering letter which I received, a few days after taking my B.A. degree, from one of my father's old friends. "Any profession," he wrote, "is open to a high Classic." This was, indeed, good news to a young man like myself, who, having no private means, was anxious to make an independent start in life as speedily as possible; but when I began to consider the question more closely, I found that such an estimate of the opportunities presented to me was decidedly over-sanguine. For the professions open to a successful Classic were practically two only, the Church, or a mastership at a public school: I was privileged, in fact, either to enter into Holy Orders, or to undertake the less holy management of schoolboys. I came to the conclusion that the latter occupation was the one to which I must devote myself; and though I could not but confess that I was lamentably deficient in some of the chief characteristics of an Orbilius, I still felt sufficient self-confidence to warrant my aspiring to the position of assistant teacher of the dead languages in one of our English public schools.

This desire was gratified in a manner at once unexpected and embarrassing. A few weeks after taking my degree I had gone up to Cambridge to enjoy the May term, with the secret hope, perhaps, that I should not be called upon, yet awhile, to exchange the liberty of the student for the responsibilities of the schoolmaster, when one morning my day-dream was rudely broken by a letter from Dr. Hornby informing me that he wanted "help at once." An immediate answer had to be given, and I could not hesitate to accept an offer, which, in the opinion of all my friends, was a remarkable piece of good fortune; yet, such is the perversity of human nature, I began to feel serious misgivings as to my capability of discharging the task.

On an early afternoon I presented myself at Dr. Hornby's door. His manner was extremely affable and courteous, and his tall figure and dignity made him seem the very model of a Headmaster. It struck me, however, that one might detect traits of that weakness and indecision which report attributed to him; handsome as his features were, one could not but observe, on a closer approach, that they gave signs of hesitation and irresolution. But the charm of his manner soon made one ashamed of any such uncharitable scrutiny; he welcomed me with great cordiality, and made me feel at home in his presence. I found, to my relief, that I should not be called upon to teach any but the ordinary classical

subjects; in mathematics and French the boys would go to special teachers. Beyond this, I could not get much information from Dr. Hornby as to the details of my duties; especially he seemed to parry and evade any questions which I ventured to put to him about the schoolroom which would be allotted to me.

I learnt, however, from another quarter, that for the present the only available room was one popularly known—presumably on account of its narrow dimensions and general atmospheric conditions—as the "Dog Kennel," a sort of cupboard which lay below the staircase which led to Upper School. This Dog Kennel, which well deserved its title, was some fifteen feet square, and was traversed by about half a dozen low benches on one side, a desk and a stool being placed for the master on the other. There was no room for writing-desks, and when an exercise had to be done it was necessary to borrow the room of some other master whose class happened to be doing French or mathematics. There was no thoroughfare to the benches at the back of the room, except by climbing over those in front; as I presently discovered when the boys began to enter. In a few minutes all the class had arrived, and the Dog Kennel presented that thronged and serried appearance which its name led me to anticipate. It took me some time, according to the printed list which had been furnished me, to impress upon them the necessity of keeping

invariably to the places allotted them. This done, I felt that all preliminaries were gone through, the critical moment had come, the Rubicon was crossed, and I was now fairly entered on the profession of a schoolmaster.

It was a relief to find that, by a merciful dispensation of Providence, the boys were not inclined to take advantage of the somewhat helpless condition of their new master; for their return to school after the holidays, and the new position in which they found themselves, made them shy and silent at first, and inclined to act entirely on the defensive. I afterwards often noticed that audacious as boys are, when thus congregated, their mood is strangely affected by any change, however slight, in the circumstances that surround them; the absence of two or three of their number, the addition of a few strange faces, or any unexpected break in the school routine, will throw a large class into a fit of silence and moodiness. But, of course, this did not last long, and in a few days I found myself in the full swing of my profession, struggling to overcome the ignorance and inattention of my twenty-five young barbarians, while they, with equal energy, did their best to resist my advances.

It was a queer position, that of a teacher in a great school like Eton, which was often spoken of (not without a certain amount of irony, as it seemed to me) as an "ancient seat of learning." I could not flatter myself that there was much

learning in the Dog Kennel; though it was some consolation to me to discover that the other classes were in much the same condition. The most obvious impediment to any successful teaching was the enormous size of the divisions; I soon found that the utmost I could do was to maintain a sort of rough-and-ready discipline, and to seize the few opportunities that offered of interesting the boys in their lessons, and punishing any flagrant idleness.

But it was uphill work. Only those who have been placed in a similar position can realize what a struggle it was to force unpunctual boys to arrive in time, forgetful boys to remember to bring books, idle boys to learn lessons, and ill-behaved boys to sit still; and this under a system where all the conditions were unfavourable to the master, and seemed to be specially arranged to facilitate the resistance of the boy. At first I rather enjoyed the struggle than otherwise. As the votaries of "sport" profess to find an enjoyment in pitting their own skill against the instincts of the wild inhabitants of the woods, so the Eton master might experience a sort of satisfaction in contending with the instinctive indolence of the boys committed to his charge. But this excitement began to pall after a time, and I found myself wondering whether the game was worth the candle. There is such a thing as useful labour; there is also such a thing as useless toil; and it gradually dawned on me that it was not

the useful labour which was now claiming my attention. It was a relief when, after a term or two, I was able to move, in succession, to a more commodious room, and to bequeath the Dog Kennel to a junior.

XX

TWO LONG-LIVED ETONIANS

BY the death of Mr. Oscar Browning, in 1923, and of Mr. H. E. Luxmoore three years later, Eton lost two distinguished sons who had played a considerable part in the period of which I speak. So much has been written about "O. B." that I will confine my remarks to my own personal acquaintance with him and to the impressions derived therefrom. When I went to Eton as master, in 1875, he was at the zenith of his activities; and I was grateful for the kindly help which he and his mother, who was then living with him, gave to a novice like myself; a help which contrasted strongly with the entire indifference of Dr. Hornby. He gave me my first Colleger pupil, Reginald de Havilland, afterwards famous as an oarsman; and I was one of the junior assistants who "held" pupils for him, an arrangement which got him into trouble with the Headmaster when an indictment of his alleged irregularities was being compiled. I well remember how Hornby came to me and gravely inquired into the case; then, seeing anxiety in my look, added reassuringly: "Oh, it's all right, as far as you are concerned; but

Browning has broken rules in acting as he has done."

What precisely "O. B." wanted to do at Eton, is a question propounded by his admiring nephew and biographer ;[1] and the answer given by him is this : "To foster intellect, and to discourage the rising worship of athleticism." Perhaps so ; but the attempt could hardly have been made less adroitly, or in a manner more calculated to irritate his opponents and drive a Headmaster to reaction. His tactlessness, indeed, equalled his good nature, and was as evident in small personal matters as in important school affairs. I had recently been bracketed with Mr. Gerald Balfour, a former pupil of his, in the Classical Tripos ; and the remark which "O. B." made, in complimenting me, was this : "Well, you see, the Classics are only a small part of *his* accomplishments." This, though doubtless true, struck me at the moment as somewhat unhappily expressed. I soon learnt how very characteristic it was of him.

"O. B.'s" biographer resents his having been considered "a gigantic joke." But it was mainly his own fault that this was the prevalent opinion. Able in many ways, he was not a strong enough man for the huge task that he set himself, that of reforming so conservative a school as Eton : he had neither dignity, nor consistency, nor humour. If he had "streaks of genius," as Mr. A. C. Benson

[1] *Oscar Browning*, by H. E. Wortham, 1927.

wrote of him, they were very small streaks. His limitations were well understood among his colleagues at Eton, long before his name was known to the outside world.

Careless as Browning was of rules and formalities, his services to the school had been numerous. "O. B.'s" nature was of the sort in which generosity and extravagance are curiously blended; he would readily help a friend; but the pockets of those who kept company with him were likely to be soon cleared out. I once met him during the Eton holidays travelling in Switzerland with a younger colleague; and I remember how he explained to me the principle on which their exchequer was administered. They had a purse in common—he showed it to me—into which each of them put a certain sum for joint expenses, and when the money was gone they at once renewed their contribution. This, as "O. B." pointed out, was obviously the just and fair arrangement. His companion said nothing; but from his doleful looks I surmised that the need for refilling the purse came round rather more frequently than he relished.

"O. B.'s" dismissal by Dr. Hornby—the King Log who never bestirred himself except on that occasion—was greatly resented by his friends. It was not generally known, but it was nevertheless a fact, that three other assistant masters, Warre-Cornish, Ainger, and Luxmoore, proffered their resignations as a protest; but as Dr. Hornby

remained obdurate these confederates, unlike "the three" in the "Lays of Ancient Rome," were obliged to climb down. Two of them, so I was told by a colleague in whom Hornby had confided, made their withdrawal with good grace; the third, A. C. Ainger, did not express himself quite so handsomely.

It so happened that another master, the Rev. William Wayte, a man of encyclopædic and rather ponderous learning, left Eton about the same time, and the report was that both he and "O. B." had a desire for the headship of some College at Cambridge. Hence the following lines, of uncertain origin, in which the supposed characteristics of the two men, and of two Colleges, were indicated:

"From Etona to Granta go Browning and Wayte,
To seek laurels afresh in a happier state;
Being Masters at school, they've acquired such knowledge
As makes them aspire to be Masters at College;
Erudition and sloth are their passports—two things
Which *par excellence* fit them for Downing's and King's.
Now Wayte, it is rumoured, has plenty of both,
While Browning's great gift is a strenuous sloth;
So Wayte shall strut pompous as Provost, and Browning
Shall sidle along as the Master of Downing.

From letters written to me by "O. B." as late as 1920 and 1921 I gathered that his expulsion from Eton still rankled in his mind. "I was dismissed," he said, "at three months' notice on the charge of having broken a rule which I had never broken, and had incurred considerable loss by keeping.

My income was reduced from three thousand to three hundred a year—my mother, to whom the school was under deep obligation, was turned out at the age of seventy-five ; my sister had to keep a school ; my name was branded as an enemy of Eton, and you know what that means."

What won him so much sympathy and support at Eton, as elsewhere, was his unfailing kindness and amiability. That was why many of his colleagues, including a man so very unlike him in temperament as Mr. H. E. Luxmoore, warmly befriended him in the bitter controversy with Dr. Hornby, who after tolerating his assistant's audacity for several years, suddenly turned upon him in wrath, and made up a dubious case for his dismissal. For that quarrel Hornby was doubtless largely to blame ; but then it was afterwards much the same at Cambridge : in short, " O. B." was always and everywhere " impossible." And yet nearly everybody liked him !

His delight in celebrities was quite touching. Once, when I was out walking with him near Slough, he turned aside for a few minutes to speak to a man whom we met on the high road. It was the painter Millais ; and when Browning rejoined me his face was radiant with pleasure as, with a gesture of ineffable satisfaction, he told me his acquaintance's name.

" O. B.'s " only public honour was an " O.B.E." There is an amusing fitness in the fact. One wishes that J. K. Stephen could have woven it

into another of those incomparable epigrams to which Browning's odd personality had the effect of inspiring him.

To turn from Browning to Luxmoore is like going straight from a broad farce to a stern old Morality Play : if a large and loose geniality was the chief characteristic of the one man, austerity, with the strictest care in every detail of his work, was that of the other. As there now remain but few of Mr. Luxmoore's older colleagues of the 'seventies and 'eighties, it is possible that the recollections of one of them may have interest for Etonian readers. It is nearly sixty years since Luxmoore was appointed Master in College. I was a Colleger at the time, and remember well the impression which he made upon us. It cannot be said that " Buffy," as we called him, was popular. I do not know whether he mellowed with age ; but as a young man he was grievously lacking in the cordiality which puts boys at their ease, and we were puzzled and troubled by a sort of monastic gloom in his features and by the doleful tones of his voice. For this we found some compensation in the fact that an old College servant, who remembered him as a boy, used to regale us with stories of his youthful escapades, to which doubtless, seeing how greatly they were relished by his audience, he did not scruple to add a certain amount of " local colour." Anyhow, we did not in the least understand or appreciate the man who was set in charge over us.

When I returned to Eton as a master, a few years later, and got to know him personally, the puzzle was partly explained; though even then his exceedingly complex nature and varying moods were often baffling to his friends. He would for the most part wear a gravity of manner which was somewhat onerous to those who had to deal with him; at other times he would relax into a kind of freakish and almost mischievous merriment, which seemed by contrast to be a little overstrained. His temperament was, I think, of the passionate, artistic kind, but so long and severely schooled by him as to be held thoroughly in check. He once told me, when we were discussing a question of religion, that he could not trust human nature apart from some religious restraint. "Without that," he said, "I might find myself running away with my neighbour's wife." He was one of the most rigidly punctual of masters; but I heard from him that he had found the "early school" at Eton a serious trial.

Luxmoore was referred to in some *Sketchy Memories of Eton* (1885), by "Mac,"[1] as "one of the most unpopular of all the masters," whose initials "H. E. L." had won him the nickname of "Pandemonium." It is evident from the obituary notices in the *Times* and the *Eton College Chronicle* that he had long lived down that early misunderstanding of a very refined and sensitive nature, hampered, as such natures sometimes

[1] Sir Melville Macnaghten.

are, by an outward lack of heartiness. After I resigned my Eton mastership in 1884, I had friendly correspondence with him at intervals, chiefly on the subject of the Eton Beagles, a sport which he intensely disliked, though he deprecated what he considered the Humanitarian League's too irreverent manner of agitating against it. He expressed himself pleased with a book of mine on the Cambrian and Cumbrian Hills, also with my verse translations from Lucretius; then, unfortunately for myself, something I had written in criticism of the Eton system incurred his strong disapproval and I was excommunicated forthwith. I regret now that I never asked for an explanation with him, but at the time I was myself exceedingly busy, and I thought he was unreasonable. I have always felt a great respect for his high character and fine artistic tastes, and I still cherish a copy of More's "Utopia" which he gave me when I last saw him. The *Times* has described him as "a great Etonian." I should hardly call him that; but I think he was the most original Eton master with whom I have had acquaintance, with the notable exception of William Johnson (Cory), the gifted author of *Ionica*.

XXI

BULGARIAN BOURCHIER

EVERYONE has seen examples of the proverbial "fish out of water," or, as I would prefer to express it, of a fish in the wrong fish-pond. For, as often as not, it is the pond that is at fault rather than the fish, a defect less of character than of environment; and so, with a prosperous change of scene, a failure may be transformed into a success, a ne'er-do-well into a champion, and from the wrong man in the wrong place may emerge the right man in the right one.

I used to know an ardent but eccentric lover of animals, who was so concerned about the welfare of all the creatures on his estate that when a large eel made an unwelcome appearance in his fish-pond, and began to devour the smaller fry, he had another pool constructed into which the offender was transferred. Philosopher that he was, he did not condemn the eel as past amendment, but gave it a chance of a new career amid different and less seductive surroundings. Which is a parable.

Turning from fish to humans, I propose to draw from my recollections of bygone years at Eton

AT KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE (ABOUT 1874)

Front row (left to right): A. A. Tilley, E. C. Selwyn, J. E. C. Welldon. J. D. Bourchier is fourth, counting from right to left.

a remarkable instance of how, in an ill-chosen profession, a man of real ability may be looked upon as incompetent, and may subsequently prove the entire injustice of such a verdict. I refer to the case of the late Mr. J. D. Bourchier, a famous *Times* correspondent in the Near East, who, when he died in 1922, had won so great a reputation among the people of Bulgaria that, as a mark of respect, his effigy has been printed on their postage stamps, and a street in Sofia named after him. To one whose memory goes back forty years and more, the contrast seems an extraordinary one. At Eton, a " fish out of water " ; a national hero in Bulgaria !

My first acquaintance with Bourchier was at King's College, Cambridge, where he came up, with a scholarship, about 1873 or 1874, after previously taking honours at Dublin. I remember how Augustus Austen Leigh, the tutor (afterwards Provost) of the College, approached some undergraduates in the court, and introduced to us a bluff, square-set young man, who spoke with a strong Irish brogue, and laughed, as one of us remarked, " with a sort of neigh." We soon got to like him well, but were amazed by his casual ways and singular absent-mindedness. He was clever ; and a few years later, after being in the first class in the Classical Tripos, he was appointed to an assistant mastership at Eton.

There I met him again, and as we had various tastes in common, and were both rather out of

sympathy with the many orthodoxies of the place, we saw a good deal of each other. He had a liking for outdoor life which he managed to indulge even during the school-time, riding both on horseback and on bicycle, and bearing the personal apppearance less of a schoolmaster than of a robust country gentleman, somewhat like Dr. O'Grady, as impersonated by Mr. Charles Hawtrey in *General John Regan*. It was whispered, indeed, though unjustly, that he was a little ashamed of his pedagogic profession, and that when he returned to Ireland in the holidays, and was asked by his friends and neighbours what had been the cause of his absence, he would say that he had been "spending a few weeks in the neighbourhood of Windsor."[1]

It must be admitted that he was not successful as a teacher, even less so than the majority of us. I think everybody liked him, and some of the senior masters, especially E. C. Austen Leigh, a brother of the Cambridge tutor, took a good deal of trouble in trying to acclimatize him, so to speak, and to induct him, alien and neophyte that he was, into a due observance of the Eton ritual. But he was constitutionally incapable of being so guided. In the first place, he was incorrigibly unpunctual; and at a public school punctuality is necessarily a matter of high importance, in a

[1] I am told by Mr. G. M. Luard, a friend of Bourchier's, that this story was wholly apocryphal and caused Bourchier some concern. I quote it merely as showing the current opinion of him at Eton.

master even more than in a boy. One of the serious concerns for Eton masters was to avoid being late at "early school," a responsibility which was often felt in equal degree by the servants whose duty it was to "call" us. As an illustration of this, I remember how a very conscientious housemaid of the old-fashioned sort, once wakened me, in a moment of excessive zeal, at 4 o'clock on a winter morning, and then was so abashed by her mistake that when day dawned she went to my mother, who was living with me at the time, and told her that she had done something so dreadful that she dared not say what it was. My mother, greatly alarmed, insisted on knowing the worst, and at length the news was broken to her: "Well, ma'am, I've called Master by moonlight!"

I presume Bourchier had no such punctilious attendant; but whether called by moonlight, candlelight, or daylight, he was often so late in his rush to early school that by the time he arrived at his class-room the boys had taken what was called "a run," the tradition being that they were entitled to decamp after fifteen minutes' waiting. It might have gone hardly with him, but for the fact that Dr. Hornby, the Headmaster, was not so punctual himself as to be in a position to find much fault, on that score, with an erring assistant.

Nor was this failing on Bourchier's part confined to his school duties. Once, having arrived very late for a dinner-party at my father-in-law's,

he gave the rather strange excuse that he "had fallen over a sheep"—whether when riding his bicycle, or passing through the Playing Fields, was not stated.

His kindliness of disposition is shown in the following letter, which I received from the widow of one of my colleagues at Eton:

"Some time ago, seeing the picture of Mr. Bourchier's grave in the *Times*, I said to my old 'Nannie' who was with me at Eton forty-five years ago, 'I suppose you do not remember Mr. Bourchier?' She said, 'Yes, indeed, I do. He used to come to my brother's place near Langley, and eat fruit in the garden.' The brother was a market-gardener. She went on to say that Mr. Bourchier used to bicycle out there, and liked to find and eat raspberries, etc., off the trees. Many years after, on returning once to England, he sought them out, and, when saying good-bye again, said: 'I am not a rich man, but when I die I shall leave you fifty pounds in my will.' He did so; and that sum was sent to her brother by his executor."

With the boys in his division, Bourchier was on pleasant and genial terms, if not exactly a disciplinarian. He once told me how in the course of a history lesson he had amused them by purposely addressing a question to Mr. Arthur Bourchier, then an Eton boy and my pupil, in order to draw a certain reply. "Bourchier," he said, "who was it that crowned King Richard III?" The answer,

given correctly, was " Cardinal Bourchier " ; and thus was exhibited a trio of Bourchiers which gave general satisfaction.[1]

But pleasant and talented as Bourchier was, a good scholar, and a fine musician, he was regarded, not without reason, as by no means fitted for the post which he then held " in the neighbourhood of Windsor," and his increasing deafness, even at that date, was adding to his difficulties. It may be asked why he was ever invited to be an Eton master. The reason was simple. Dr. Hornby, owing to his dilatory habits, often had to make his appointments in a desperate hurry ; and he would then write to the tutor of some College at Oxford or Cambridge, and beg him to send an assistant whom he could thoroughly recommend. The tutor, in this case Austen Leigh of King's, would nominate some one who had taken a sufficiently good degree, and was of blameless character, but whom he and the other dons of the college did not desire to elect to a residential Fellowship : it was their kindly way of providing in honourable fashion, and at the expense of another establishment, for the unorthodox of whom they wished to get rid. I may say this of Bourchier without offence, because I owed my own appointment at Eton to a similar cause.

[1] Arthur Bourchier was already an accomplished actor, and had made his House (Dalton's) famous for its theatricals. His father, Captain Bourchier, once told me, with some concern, that " the boy talks of going on the stage, but it's impossible—not to be thought of."

When I left Eton, at the end of 1884, I knew that Bourchier's position there was insecure; and the occasional letters which I had from him were written from the point of view of one who felt himself to be placed in very uncongenial surroundings. I should not have been at all surprised to hear that he was retiring to his Hibernian home; had anyone foretold his mission to the Near East as a correspondent of *The Times*, and his great success in that capacity, it would have seemed not only impossible but a mockery. Yet that was what açtually happened, and more; for he became a person of real consequence in the Balkans, an acknowledged authority on all political matters concerning south-east Europe, and, as such, was entrusted with certain delicate and important duties which brought him not a few honours in the countries where his work was performed. It would be difficult, in the Bourchier of 1888 to 1922, to recognize the misplaced Eton master, the "fish out of water," of the previous years.[1]

I saw him now and then during his visits to London, and he told me, with amusement, that he had become the friend and associate of kings: with one of whom (I presume it was Ferdinand

[1] The mystery of the change in Bourchier is not lessened by a reading of his Life, as written by Lady Grogan. One there finds in him, at a later date, some of the oddities and shortcomings as at Eton; but I cannot remember that he showed as a schoolmaster any of the shrewdness of his after career. He was often very tactless.

of Bulgaria) he was quite intimate and " chummy " in private, though he had to conform to the usual ceremonies before the eyes of the Court. To a friend who asked him how he was able, in spite of his deafness, to act as a newspaper correspondent, he replied that his deafness was a help rather than a hindrance to his work, because, as everything that you hear in the Balkan countries is a lie, he was often saved by his infirmity from transmitting false reports to Printing House Square. Here is a principle which might be worth the consideration, not of editors only, but of governments. Diplomacy may yet be found to be peculiarly the function of the deaf.

To one who knew Bourchier in his former capacity, the peccant member of Dr. Hornby's staff, whose escapades were groaned over or smiled at, as the mood might be, there is humour in the thought that he attained to high distinction in another sphere, while his old colleagues and mentors were still teaching Greek grammar and correcting Latin verses, or, in other words, pouring water through a sieve. I wonder whether it ever occurred to them that, in the long run, they themselves had the better claim to be considered the queer fish ?

XXII

A ROUGH DIAMOND

I HAVE spoken of the *collective* sense of humour which showed itself among the boys in their quick recognition of any oddity or quaintness; but I cannot recall, with the one brilliant exception of J. K. Stephen—and it was at Cambridge that he came to his prime—that the Eton of 1866 to 1885 produced any individual humorist of note. Certainly among the masters there was no one who merited such title. Russell Day was famed for his epigrams and tart sayings, but they came from him but rarely, and when they did come were rather of the mordant kind; William Johnson made clever and eccentric remarks; and Dr. Hornby was a charming after-dinner speaker, with a keen eye for the incongruous aspect of things. But humour is a gift which is rarely found, and which one does not expect to find in jaded schoolmasters; and Eton was no exception to the rule. It therefore surprised me to read in Mr. Hugh Macnaghten's *Fifty Years of Eton* that among my colleagues in the 'seventies and 'eighties there was one "incomparable humorist."

This, it seems, was Mr. E. C. Austen Leigh, who at a later date became Lower Master of Eton.

On the strength of ten years' fairly close acquaintance, and of a still vivid recollection, I should prefer to call him "a rough diamond." A native wit he certainly had, and of a very pungent order; but of the rare and delicate quality denoted by the term "humour" he was quite devoid, and even his wit owed much of its effectiveness to his not scrupling to use it, when the mood took him, without any regard to politeness. Perhaps he mellowed in the later years when he was Lower Master of Eton; I speak of him as I saw him.

Let me give a single instance which came under my own observation, and which, as anyone who knew him will testify, was entirely characteristic of the man.

There used to be a short and informal meeting of the masters every week-day at eleven o'clock, before the school that was supposed to begin a quarter of an hour later; but owing largely to Dr. Hornby's own unpunctuality much time was wasted, and his attempts to be more businesslike had invariably failed. One day he tapped on the table, to intimate that he had something to tell us, and when the buzz of voices had subsided he gave out that on the following Monday school would begin punctually at 11.15. Instantly a shrill and somewhat nasal-toned voice was heard: "Are we to understand, sir, that your announcement refers to Monday *only?*" The question was ostensibly innocent enough, but by implication very offensive, and a good specimen of that class

of caustic wit in which Austen Leigh was proficient. Shrewd he undoubtedly was; but the shrewdness which shows itself in rudeness is a different thing from humour.

Now, whatever the faults of the typical Etonian may have been, rudeness was not one of them; indeed, it has been said in the *Eton College Chronicle*[1] that "the Etonian is the gentleman par excellence: his manners are beautiful." The reader would perhaps prefer outside testimony; but it is a fact that Etonians were uniformly polite, and that if the picture of school life drawn in that disagreeable book *The Loom of Youth* is true of some schools to-day, it is not true of the Eton of half a century back. The boys treated each other with courtesy, sometimes a humorous courtesy, as the following little incident will show. A Sixth Form youth, who shall be nameless, being annoyed by the musical efforts of a neighbour who had taken to practising on the banjo, or some such instrument, in an adjoining study, adopted this delicate method of intimating that he was disturbed. He sent a fag to the musician's room with a copy of Gilbert's "Bab Ballads," and a mark against the following verse in a poem about the bagpipes:

> "Macphaerson, Clonglocketty, Angus, my lad,
> With pibroch and reels you are driving me mad;
> If you really must play on that cursed affair,
> My goodness! play something resembling an air."

[1] December 12, 1912.

And in a minute or two the fag returned, bringing a marked copy of Tennyson's "The Poet's Mind":

> "Vex not thou the poet's mind
> With thy shallow wit:
> Vex not thou the poet's mind,
> For thou can'st not fathom it."

Teaching is a wearisome profession; and I suppose there is more excuse for a master's inability to take life humorously than for a boy's, even when engaged in a game of tennis or of Fives. At any rate, Austen Leigh was one of the most contentious and contradictory persons I ever met, and his sole pleasantry was to score small points off the unwary. In this he was usually successful; there were rare occasions, however, where it was a case of "the biter bit." I remember how in a small company, he was inveighing against the restlessness, as he considered it, which prompted the younger masters to change house too frequently: "Why," he said, "*I* lived for several years in that small house in Keate's Lane"; and he looked round at us in a sort of bold, challenging way that was habitual with him. But unluckily some one—the younger J. L. Joynes, I think—inquired whether, during those exemplary years, he had had the option of any larger house; at which he pretended to think for a moment, and then admitted that he had not had such offer. "That makes a difference, doesn't it?" was the retort; and we heard no more of the small house in Keate's Lane.

Here let me say that Austen Leigh was a thoroughly upright and kind-hearted man, and that the censoriousness which made him so disagreeable at times was merely an unfortunate habit or affectation, which he perhaps indulged the more freely because, while he possessed a quick perception of other persons' weaknesses, he had none whatever of his own—a point which at once distinguished him from a true humorist. I have heard him tell many a story, make many a jest, at the expense of his victims, never one against himself. His own mentality, too, however sharp-witted he might be, was very limited : he admired Mrs. Hemans's poetry, and devoted time to compiling a directory of Clubs ! Need more be said ?

I have often thought that there was a remarkable likeness in Austen Leigh's character, even in certain personal traits, to that of Everard Romfrey, the satirical country gentleman sketched by George Meredith in *Beauchamp's Career*. Look, for instance, at such touches as these : " The conversation he delighted in most might have been going on in any century since the Conquest." And again : " There he rested. A medieval gentleman with the docile notions of the twelfth century, complacently driving them to grass and wattling them in the nineteenth." And yet again, in reference to the manner in which his witticisms were delivered : " Everard knitted his mouth to intensify a peculiar subdued form of laughter through the nose." I seem to see and hear Mr.

Macnaghten's " incomparable humorist " in those descriptions.

It was in connection with his own pupils, and the reports made about them by masters who were so unfortunate as to have any of them in their divisions, that Austen Leigh's contradictoriness was most trying. He always took the boy's part, if blamed, and conveyed to the master his decided opinion that he was mistaken. Was the boy found to be lazy? That was precisely what he was *not*. Unpunctual? It was the first time any such failing had been attributed to him. And so on, through the whole category; whatever you said to him, were it blame or were it praise, was wrong. I have a lively recollection how he once came to me holding in his hand a rather favourable report of one of his pupils which I had sent him, as I was expected to do, at the end of the school-time, and told me (with the Everard Romfrey snort) that I " must be mad " to write what I did of the boy. I am ashamed to say that I lost my temper on that one occasion, and bade him, my senior by many years—well, I need not repeat what I said. But I want to describe the unforeseen and sobering effect which my outburst had on him.

In an instant he became courteous, considerate, friendly; and the matter between us was settled without any further trouble. There then dawned on me, for the first time, a melancholy truth of which I have since had abundant evidence, that

though a soft answer turneth away wrath, it is the sharp answer that turneth away rudeness. A rude man does not realize that his manners cause resentment, unless it is brought home to him in his own tongue.

But let it not be supposed that Austen Leigh saw any mitigating circumstances in his pupils' faults when he himself was the sufferer by them; for there was no one who could deal more effectively with a misdemeanant. He went straight to the point with a directness which broke through the common forms of evasion. "Did you learn that lesson with a crib?" he asked a boy in pupil-room. "No, sir," came the answer, quite pat. "Run and fetch it," said the tutor in the same matter-of-fact tone; and in two or three minutes the crib was on his desk.[1]

I must not give the impression that Austen Leigh was the only Eton tutor who was unreasonable where his pupils were concerned; there were one or two others who made the task of the division-master more difficult than it need have been by their unwillingness to lend him their support. The Rev. William Wayte, known as "Tolley Wayte," was almost equally unable to see the faults of his pupils, unless discovered by himself; and woe betide the colleague who became involved in an argument with him, for he was a man of immense learning, tenacity, and

[1] I was reminded of the incident by the title of the Marquess of Aberdeen's book: *Tell me Another.*

obtuseness, whose desire to have the last word was usually gratified owing to a stammer in his speech, which made it vain to reserve your answer till he had done, for he rarely *had* done. He furnished amusement to the boys, and apparently to some others also; for there was a story that an impudent photographer who was taking Mrs. Wayte's portrait, and telling her in the professional manner to look cheerful, had said to her: "Think of something pleasant, madam. Think of Mr. Wayte." To that extent, he, too, was unconsciously a humorist.

It never occurred to me that I had earned his disapprobation till, many years afterwards, when we had both left Eton, there reached me a sort of Voice from the Past, transmitted by my friend Mr. F. B. Sanborn, the American biographer of Thoreau, who told me with a smile that he had met Mr. Wayte travelling in Greece, and had recklessly asked him if he remembered Salt. "I do," he said. "He was an exceedingly foolish young man." And so I must have been, to have listened in patience to his interminable babblings. The old ingrate! Yet I rather liked him.[1]

On the whole, looking back, I feel that the palm for humour, in that Bygone Eton, if palm be awarded, must go after all to Dr. Hornby himself. I shall never forget how just after he had

[1] A charming account of Mr. Wayte was given in *Sketchy Memories of Eton*, by "Mac" (Sir Melville Macnaghten). Calcutta, 1885.

become Provost, and Dr. Warre, his successor in the Headmastership, had announced his intention of inspecting the divisions personally while the lessons were going on—an innovation which we regarded with some alarm—Dr. Hornby approached a small knot of masters who were standing in School Yard, and after chaffing us on the ordeal that was to come, added pleasantly: "Well, I'm glad they didn't inspect *me*."

XXIII

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF FIVES

THE psychology of Fives is as unlike that of cricket as the games themselves are dissimilar. A cricket match is a prolonged campaign, demanding two or three days for its accomplishment, and even then often left unfinished when the players adopt the defensive tactics of " digging themselves in." Fives, on the other hand, involves but a short, sharp contest, and is content with fewer hours than the days which fail to satisfy the cricketer.

In cricket no great trouble is necessarily caused if one or two of the players happen to be out of sorts or out of temper, as when some batsman is convinced that the umpire has condemned him unjustly, or when some bowler feels equally certain that the batsman has been unfairly reprieved. Even the " Old Man " of cricket, the great W. G. Grace, we are told, would occasionally be upset for hours together by some untoward incident of the sort, yet the tenor of the game was undisturbed. But in Fives, where there are but two players on each side, and the struggle is carried on at much closer quarters and with a much shorter allowance of time, any indisposition

on the part of one player is likely to affect the rest, and this not merely by discouraging his partner, but by spoiling the interest of the game scarcely less for his opponents. For there is something contagious in these ailments; and whereas a keen spirit on one side will evoke the same on the other, a single grumbler or slacker will spoil all, whether by inability to keep his temper, or by the more frequent mistake of supposing that bad jokes can atone for bad strokes. I used to see many a game ruined by such faults or follies of temperament.

The two most original products of Etonian genius are its game of Fives and its Wall football, both invented to suit the peculiarities of an ancient structure, the Eton Fives-court having been evolved from one of the gaps between two buttresses on the north side of the Chapel, and the Wall game being played along and under a high brick wall, which provides an opportunity for collisions and abrasions even superior to those that are enjoyed by footballers in the gentle pastime that hails from Rugby.

There is no better sport than Fives for busy persons who cannot afford the time that cricket demands, and the game was much in favour with some masters at Eton as well as with the boys; in an hour or two you had sufficient exercise to keep you in condition for a week. Among the masters A. C. Ainger and E. C. Austen Leigh had long been the leading pair at the period of which I

speak, and it was my good fortune to be often on the courts with them, sometimes with Edward Lyttelton (afterwards Headmaster) as my partner, and that we succeeded in beating the champions was chiefly due to the fact that he was the most dexterous and ambidextrous, of us all.[1] My father-in-law, J. L. Joynes, senior, had been a great player in former years ; and on one or two occasions he was persuaded to make a reappearance in the game ; Ainger used to say that he had still some strokes that no one else could make.

Fives being, as I have said, a rapidly played and very exacting game which tests to the utmost the mettle and temper of those who take part in it, great precaution was necessary in making up the four players ; for a " cripple " on the court meant a wasted afternoon ; and as this was a fact which the cripples never understood, and which it was not easy to explain to them, we were often placed in an embarrassing position by the importunity of their invitations. What on earth was one to say, when Mr. ——, whose incompetence was notorious, would come round, a week beforehand, to ask you to play with him on Saturday afternoon ? You could not tell him, in that ambiguous scriptural phrase, that one day on his courts was

[1] In his *Memories and Hopes*, Dr. Lyttelton has recorded a remark of Ainger's which I had quite forgotten. It seems that when I had made a good stroke in one of these contests, Ainger said to me, in reference to my vegetarianism : " Why, Salt, you must have come upon a caterpillar in your cabbage this morning."

"better than a thousand"; though that, in a sense, was very true. "Extremely sorry, but I think I am going to London," was all very well at the moment, but when Saturday came there was the danger of meeting the man in Eton, and then another excuse for *not* having gone to London would have to be improvized.

Another danger to so delicately poised a game was that arising from the personality of the players. Temper, like murder, will out; and a Fives-court was the sort of place to evoke it. Austen Leigh, skilful though he was at many games, was strangely unable to retain his equanimity if things went wrong with him, and the satisfaction of playing in his company was in consequence rather diminished. Sir Walter Durnford, though, as it happened, a personal friend of his, told me that he made a point, when asked to join in a game, of inquiring whether Mr. Leigh was going to be of the company, and if that were so, he declined the invitation there and then. In this respect, however, Leigh stood almost alone. Durnford himself, afterwards Provost of King's College, Cambridge, was invariably cheerful, and had a sort of slogan when first stepping on to the court: "Victory, or Westminster Abbey!" I think it was more often Westminster Abbey for his side; but it was always a pleasure to be his partner.

At Eton, in the early 'seventies, there was a great lack of Fives-courts; and the eager competition

for them among the boys was seen in the headlong rush that took place after school, or even after chapel, beginning, as sometimes happened, before the doors of the sacred edifice were passed. Later on, a number of new and better courts were built, and by the adoption of some plan by which they were allotted, the scandal of the race down the chapel steps was abolished.

Not long ago, a correspondent of *The Times*,[1] who was referring, very truly, to the merits of Fives as a winter exercise, remarked that it is played far too seldom when school and college days are over, and that the cost of a court does not exceed that of a two-seater car. But apart from the expense, and, a further consideration, the space required for a Fives-court, there is, as I have said, the need of getting together a well-balanced set of players, the fit and proper Four; and the difficulty of doing this is immensely greater in an ordinary town than in the neighbourhood of a school or college. Fives, for these reasons, must always be, like Rackets, a very localized game, appealing to the few rather than to the many; but the enthusiasm of those who know it will insure that it shall never die out. To me it forms one of the pleasantest memories of the days of which I speak.

[1] October 16, 1925.

XXIV

THE ASCHAM SOCIETY

THE Ascham Society was a select body of Eton Masters, who were supposed to represent the "intellectuals" among Dr. Hornby's assistants. This, it used to seem to me, was a rather unfortunate discrimination, for two reasons; first, that those who were *not* invited to join the Society were apt to consider themselves slighted by an invidious preference; secondly, that the intellect exhibited by the chosen few was hardly of so high an order as to justify any such exclusiveness. It would have been much more sensible to have an Eton Masters' debating society, open to all.

It was after I had held an Eton mastership some five or six years that I was invited to become a member of this august body; and not without trepidation did I find my turn coming round for reading a paper to my fellow Aschamites. The plan adopted was for each paper to be read at the house of the master who wrote it, and followed by light refreshments; we were thus expected to cater, in a double sense, for the tastes of our colleagues. On the first occasion when this duty fell to my lot, I read a paper on Shelley. The

choice was perhaps rather an injudicious one, because Shelley, then as now, and not least at Eton, was somewhat of a challenge to conservative feeling; but as he had been my favourite poet, not only at Cambridge, but in my boyhood, I could not resist the inclination to ask for a reversion of judgment on the author of "Laon and Cythna" and "Prometheus Unbound." What was the prevalent opinion about Shelley, some thirty years ago, in academical circles, may be dimly gathered from a remark made in a letter by Henry Jackson, the well-known Cambridge lecturer and man of letters. "Rousseau, Shelley, Byron," he wrote, "were a bad lot; but it is amusing to read about them, provided that one recognizes that they were bounders."[1]

It was not surprising, then, that when I commended Shelley to my Eton colleagues as not only an Etonian and a great poet, but a thinker and a prophet, I got little support. Even William Johnson had not in the least appreciated Shelley; and at the time of which I am speaking there were few, if any, masters at Eton who had a real love for the poetry of their native tongue. I remember that the best support I had in that debate came from H. E. Luxmoore; and even he expressed himself as much "pained" by the poet's treatment of his father, the old Sir Timothy of Field Place. Still, it was a paper that had to be read.

A few months later the substance of the lecture

[1] *Memoir of Henry Jackson*, by R. St. John Percy, 1926.

appeared as an article in *Temple Bar*, then edited by George Bentley, a devoted lover of all good poetry, including Shelley's. I remember how that article brought me a letter from an aged and pious relative, telling me what a real "shock" it had given her to find Shelley spoken of as "Christ-like." So difficult is it to satisfy all tastes!

As a rule, I was only a listener at the many other Ascham meetings which I attended in the houses of friends; but once I got into some slight trouble when that well-known scholar and Senior Classic, F. H. Rawlins, familiarly known to his school-fellows as "Pate," read a most eulogistic paper on George Eliot, but deeply deplored, as her one great lapse from propriety of conduct, her irregular connection with G. H. Lewes. We were rather "fed up," in those early days, with the talk about *Adam Bede* and *Middlemarch;* and in a moment of revolt I was so rash as to remark that, to me, the great author's single challenge to respectability, so lamented by Mr. Rawlins, was "the redeeming feature of a terribly over-moralized career." I think, when I said that, I knew that my further stay at Eton was not going to be prolonged.

There was another meeting, at J. P. Carter's house, to which, as I remember, we were invited on the strength not only of a discussion, the subject of which has escaped me, but of a feast on veal. To this, as a vegetarian, it was impossible for me

to consent ; and the invitation was declined in some Latin lines, framed in imitation of Martial, which began as follows :

Iste vitellinæ, mihi quem protendis, amice,
Carnis odor gravis est : cetera cuncta placent.
Proh pudor ! Aschamici pinguescent more ferarum ?
Odit sanguineas vera Minerva dapes.

And so on. The epigram ended, very properly, with :

Si non vis vitulo parcere, parce mihi !

That, I think, was my last communication to the Ascham Society, some forty-four years back. I wonder whether the meetings go on still !

XXV

THE BEECHES

THERE is no need to say *which* Beeches. "The Beeches" at Eton meant the Burnham Beeches; none else. I have mentioned in an earlier chapter that they were a sort of *Ultima Thule* for the boys, as it was barely possible to get to them, and back to Eton, within the prescribed hours, unless recourse were had to driving, at the risk of meeting Mr. Hardisty, and having to take refuge behind umbrellas. For masters, who were not thus enslaved by the clock, the excursion was an easy one, and quite the pleasantest in the district.

Except for the charms of the river, the country round Eton has no very remarkable features. Windsor Park is well enough; but you have to go through Windsor to get to it, and then the fact that it *is* a park is rather too obtrusive to be forgotten, and the "Long Walk" is apt to seem most deserving of its name. I rarely went to the Park, except when M. Roublot, the French master, who was fond of outdoor pursuits, persuaded me to go truffle-hunting, himself performing, as he declared, the part of the pig, trained in France to detect the position of the fungus.

LAUREL COTTAGE, BURNHAM BEECHES. 1884

Stoke Poges, in the other direction, was a place of interest for the devotees of Gray. Mr. Kegan Paul, the publisher, who had formerly been chaplain at Eton, and Master in College, would sometimes come down from London with a literary friend—on one occasion Sir Edmund Gosse—to spend the afternoon in a visit to Stoke ; and as one of my colleagues at Eton, Mr. D. C. Tovey, was also a student and editor of Gray, there were other occasions to make the pilgrimage. But it was love of the Elegy rather than love of Nature that took us there.

Natural history, and the joys of the country, had not many votaries at Eton ; either among boys or masters ; for games inevitably absorbed much of the boys' time, and the masters were equally busy in other pursuits.[1] But there were a few to whom the woodland scenery of The Beeches appealed very strongly ; and during my last year or two as a master at Eton, when it must be confessed I was beginning to tire somewhat, not of boyhood, but of the ubiquitous schoolboy, and inclined at times to agree with a secret and seditious local saying : "What a nice place Eton would be, if it were not for the boys!" I spent many a summer half-holiday there, while my pupils were happily engaged on cricket-ground or river.

Surely the Beech is the most lovely of all our

[1] The Rev. C. Wolley-Dod was a notable exception. He was a field naturalist of distinction, and always willing to give encouragement to boys whose tastes lay in that direction.

English trees, in all weathers and at all seasons. It is difficult to forgive Thomas Campbell (the poet whom William Johnson preferred to Shelley !) for those apologetic stanzas of his, entitled " The Beech Tree's Petition," in which he implores the woodman, who possibly had a much better appreciation of the tree than he himself had, to spare the beech, in spite of its supposed demerits, which he laboriously enumerates, for the sake of its redeeming associations with mankind. One wonders whether the poet had ever spent as much as an hour in a beech wood, if he could write so abjectly about the " dark unwarming shade," and the " bloomless fruitless solitude," of those glorious aisles and avenues where it is a rapture to walk, and where even the dead leaves, as Hudson has remarked, retain their lustre for a winter and more. " The Beech Tree's Petition " used to serve well enough as a subject for Latin Verse at Eton ;[1] at Burnham, with the forest itself in evidence, it would have sounded a very false note.

So at a time when cycling was in its infancy, and the motor-car, the horse's salvation and the pedestrian's damnation, still unknown, I had bought one of those now long-forgotten double tricycles—" Sociables " they were called—a heavy

[1] It is just the sort of poem that lends itself for bad recitation or worse parody. It was an Old Etonian, I regret to say, who wrote " The Birch-Tree's Petition," in deprecation of the proposed discontinuance of corporal punishment. I prudently withhold his name.

but comfortable machine on which two persons could travel side by side, and I kept it at the outskirts of Eton on the Slough road, a point where it was handy to mount and start forth unobserved. Windsor and the Berkshire district were left quite unvisited; it was the easily accessible Buckinghamshire county that was the attraction; and very delightful it was, after gliding quietly past Chalvey and Salt Hill, and crossing the Great Western Railway at a bridge where Dr. Hornby, it was said, was fond of watching the great expresses speed on their way, to head northward across the open land to Farnham Royal, with The Beeches as the aim and object of our trip. My wife was my usual companion, quite undeterred by a hint which she had received indirectly from Mrs. Hornby (it seems almost incredible now) that for a lady to ride a tricycle was " not a nice thing to do " ; at other times one of my colleagues would go with me, J. D. Bourchier, perhaps, who was himself a cyclist, and entirely regardless of the fact that the practice was frowned upon by the Eton authorities.

In those days The Beeches were in their natural condition, nor had any broad and ugly drives been laid out to mar the sylvan charm of the place. Tea at Laurel Cottage, a stroll through the woods, with perhaps a hunt for some edible fungi, such as the golden Chantarelle, for the morrow's breakfast, and then the return journey through the quiet lanes in the cool of the evening: such was the

course that we followed. Among my pleasantest recollections are those hours of freedom; hours stolen from Eton, it is true, but now so closely associated with the sum of Eton memories as to have become inseparable from the rest.

XXVI

A TOURIST'S ADVENTURE

I HAVE mentioned that Dr. Hornby, slackest of Headmasters, found occasion to dismiss several of his assistants. One of these malefactors was my brother-in-law, J. L. Joynes, junior, who lost his mastership at Eton as a result of a tour which he took in Ireland in the summer holidays of the year 1882. I must remind the reader that, in those bygone times, Ireland was what Russia has since become to such patriotic, respectable, academic centres of immobility as Eton College, a name suggesting the fires of Revolution ; and that to prevent Ireland obtaining a measure of self-government was then deemed as much the duty of good British citizens as it is now assumed to be to thwart the machinations of Moscow. Unless this is kept in mind, it would be difficult to understand how a trip to the neighbouring island could be productive of such calamitous results. But first a word about the Tourist himself.

James Leigh Joynes was born in 1853, at Eton, where his father was an assistant for many years, and afterwards Lower Master. When about twelve years old, he was elected to one of the

Foundation Scholarships, and after several years as a Colleger, went on to King's College, Cambridge, in 1871. His health had been delicate in boyhood, and owing to this he had lived much at home and was little known to his school-fellows, in whose games and amusements he seldom took part. He was shy, silent and retiring ; yet I think it was in the long run an advantage to him *not* to have caught the facile Etonian manner, for the true strength of his character lay in quite different qualities. Certainly for myself, who, though nominally his school-fellow at Eton, had not really known him till we met at Cambridge, it was a surprise and profit to see one so genuine and unsophisticated, who had not the least respect for the humbug of " appearances," whose abruptness and angularity were in marked contrast to the Etonian polish, and whose bluntness of speech was only less notable than the kindliness of his heart.[1]

In 1875 Joynes took his degree in the Classical Tripos (he was seventh in the first class), but he did not obtain a Fellowship at his college, as the Respectables, who had the award of such honours, seized this opportunity of paying off old scores. A little later we were both assistant masters at Eton, and here for several years Joynes was an

[1] His younger brother, Herman Joynes, also an Etonian, was entirely different in character, and rather lacking in nerves. It was he who, when suddenly confronted by a Salvationist, in a south-coast watering-place, and asked whether he was " saved," fell into confusion, and answered : " Oh, no, thank you ! I'm only a visitor here."

exemplary tutor, diligently doing for his pupils, in accordance with what was euphemistically known as the Eton "tutorial system," the work which they were too lazy to do for themselves, and writing or revising about thirty thousand Latin verses per annum. This was the way to win golden opinions (and, what is more valuable, a large income) at Eton; but unfortunately we were both under suspicion as radicals and freethinkers, also we had adopted vegetarianism, which was felt to be a dangerous and immoral practice, and then, again, we rode tricycles, which was thought to be almost as bad. So gradually our friend's affairs were drifting towards a crisis—and it came.

What brought matters to a head was the visit paid to England and Ireland by Henry George in 1882. We all had read *Progress and Poverty*, and Joynes had been greatly impressed by it; and when, in the summer holidays of that year, he met and travelled with George in Ireland, a friendship at once sprang up between them which had an important influence on his life. By a ridiculous blunder of the Irish Constabulary, under the Coercion Acts, the two travellers were arrested and locked up as dangerous conspirators; and, though they were quickly discharged when the magistrates discovered the error, the whole Press of the country rang with amused comments, including a parody, by J. K. Stephen, of Gray's "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College," evidently written up to the one line, "To snatch

a fearful Joy(nes)." The incident, however, was a serious one. The Government had to apologize to Henry George as an American citizen ; and a brilliant account of the fiasco, written by Joynes, and published in *The Times*, caused great scandal in Etonian circles, where publicity was regarded—not without good reason—as the thing of all things to be deprecated. Great, then, was the horror of the Eton authorities when, a few weeks later, an advertisement announced Joynes' forthcoming volume, *Adventures of a Tourist in Ireland*. In hot haste he was informed by the Headmaster, Dr. Hornby, that he must choose between his mastership and his book. He chose the latter, and resigned his post at Eton at the end of 1882.

Probably if an estimate of Joynes's character had been written by one of his academical colleagues, and compared with another written by one of his socialist fellow-workers of a later period, the contrast would have been absolute and complete. The reason is that the escape from Eton, to a man of his sympathies, was something more than a mere change of occupation ; it was a veritable passing from death-in-life to life. Everyone used to notice the surprising improvement in his health, spirits, and appearance ; due to the fact that in socialism he had at last found work in which he thoroughly believed. I say socialism, because his clear mind necessarily did not stop short at Henry George's measure of Land Nationalization.

I must not forget to mention his love of nature

and the country, of children, and of all simple and beautiful things. He was never more happy than when living a quiet and hardy life in a country cottage, among his bees and his flowers, and spending whole days in the open air. Burnham Beeches was one of his favourite haunts when he was living at Eton, and he was fond of visiting the Cumberland mountains at all seasons of the year. Though certainly not strong in constitution, and not practised in athletics, he was, outdoors as indoors, a man of eminently helpful and self-reliant habits; could shift for himself under any circumstances, and help others as well. In his own family he was the one to whom all came for advice and assistance, from the most important matter to the most trivial. He was a good walker, and a most expert and daring mountain-climber; fond also of boating, swimming, driving, cycling, and all open-air occupations, except those which consist in murdering one's fellow-creatures under the name of "sport." In these he never had any share whatever at any period of his life, to which fact he was doubtless indebted for the true manliness that distinguished him.

A strong leaning towards scientific and medical studies led him, about 1887, to enter himself as a student at the Middlesex Hospital, and the subsequent breakdown in his health was mainly caused by the overstrain of a severe course of reading, in which he unwisely tried to pass his examinations in less than the ordinary time. He

had had one or two indications of a weakness of heart, but did not sufficiently attend to them until it was too late. In the summer of 1889 began the long illness which disabled him from all active work for the rest of his life ; yet even during this weary time of suffering and disappointment, borne with the quiet humorous patience so characteristic of him, his thoughts, and even his pen, were busy. In his cottage at West Hoathly, on the mid-Sussex hills, a wild upland district in which he much delighted, he wrote or revised the poems included in his last volume, " On Lonely Shores," which surpassed any of his earlier verses in form and workmanship, but were perhaps too closely modelled on certain favourite authors. The last letter written by him was to William Morris, whose friendship, like that of Bernard Shaw, he valued as greatly as he admired his genius. He died at West Hoathly in January, 1893, and was buried in the beautiful churchyard which looks across the weald to the line of the Sussex Downs. I cannot conclude better than by quoting one of Lord Olivier's stanzas, " To a Revolutionary Poet," which admirably sum up the character of him to whom they were in fact addressed :

" Because you could not choose to cramp
Your stripling soul in custom's mail,
Nor prate the catchwards of the camp,
Nor strive to shine, nor fear to fail,
Therefore your soul was made aware
Of many secrets of the air.

William Reeves

HENRY GEORGE

Author of *Progress and Poverty*

Comrade, because your soul was free,
  Because in strife with gloom and wrong,
Your ear and pen learnt mastery,
  Because your heart was blithe and strong,
Therefore for us these songs of yours
Breathe of the beauty that endures."

Such was one of the assistant masters whom Dr. Hornby dismissed, and such the adventure to which he owed the loss of his mastership.

XXVII

SOCIALISM REPROVED

OUR great schools have long been regarded as one of the chief bulwarks against socialism. That they have not yet discovered what socialism means one may infer from the letters still addressed to newspapers by distinguished public schools men; certainly at the period to which my recollections go back, the 'eighties of the last century, the queerest notions prevailed as to the designs of the "revolutionists," for that was the name under which all social reformers were genially classed.

It so happened that I was in the rather curious position of being an assistant master at Eton, that nursery and citadel of Toryism, and also in friendly touch with many of the pioneers of twentieth-century socialism; in brief, as more than one person remarked to me, I "kept very bad company"—I need not specify to which sort of company they referred.[1] I had thus a favourable opportunity for hearing what socialism meant, from the mouths of some of its early exponents, and also what it did *not* mean, as denounced with

[1] I feel sure that the charitable reader, seeing with what irreproachable company this story has so far been concerned, will condone the slight lapse that has now to be recorded.

no less vigour by adversaries who were predestined to misunderstand it.

Surely a great movement never had smaller beginnings. When my brother-in-law, J. L. Joynes, who after resigning his Eton mastership rather than withdraw the book which Dr. Hornby had banned, had become closely connected with the Social Democratic Federation, used to bring me news of the doings of that body, we should have been more than surprised if anyone had foretold that within forty years there would be a powerful socialist party in this country. Through Joynes I became acquainted with H. M. Hyndman, Henry George, William Morris, H. H. Champion, John Burns, Belfort Bax, Bernard Shaw, Edward Carpenter, and other dangerous characters; and as I was a writer in *Justice*, I found myself somewhat of a suspect among my colleagues, many of whom favoured me with their personal views as to the hollowness of the socialist ideals.

It is a little difficult, at this distance of time, to realize what a scare H. M. Hyndman made with so small a party as the S.D.F. then was: his very name was a terror, and in a revised form of the Litany which Edward Carpenter and I prepared for the use of the Respectable Classes we felt compelled to substitute "Hyndman" for "Satan," in the prayer, so that it ran: "And finally to beat down Hyndman under our feet." What Eton thought especially deplorable was that an old Sussex cricketer like Hyndman, and public school men such as Morris, Carpenter, and

Champion, should lend themselves to so disreputable an enterprise as the socialist propaganda.

I regret now that I did not take some notes of the talk about socialism that I used to hear at Eton, whether at dinner-parties or in the course of walks with other masters: it was so charmingly naïve and frank. The general nature of it, however, I remember well; for indeed, I doubt whether anyone ever had the dear old absurdities dinned into him more assiduously than I. At least "a billion of times" (as De Quincey would have said) must I have been told that if all the wealth of the country were distributed in equal shares, the needy would in the sequel be no better off. Not less often was I reminded that there are other inequalities besides those of social position; or that if the incentive to work were once removed, the prosperity of our country would be sapped; or that it was to thrift, not to "confiscation," that we must look for national safety. There was humour, and plenty of it, in the zeal with which the duty of thrift was inculcated by the well-to-do folk in those days, not at Eton only, but on innumerable platforms, and Sunday after Sunday at outdoor meetings in the parks. It became such a fetish as to inspire a socialist poet (report said it was William Morris) with these feeling lines:

"'Reward of saving . . .' he began;
The day was very hot:
The people rose up like one man,
And slew him on the spot."

I could have wished that some of my colleagues at Eton might suffer that fate.

A lecture which Morris gave before the Eton Literary Society caused considerable excitement, for though socialism was not directly discussed in it, the suspicions of his audience were aroused, and a good deal of hissing was mingled with the applause bestowed on him. I remember, just after that lecture, hearing R. A. H. Mitchell, that great cricketer and excellent good fellow, then a master at Eton, explaining to a circle of friends, who listened with grave approbation, the impossibility of socialism. There was not a single political economist, he said, who did not condemn it.

I lingered on as a master at Eton till the end of 1884, and was subject to the reproof and admonition of my friends on many occasions before I left. It was a habit of Hyndman's to talk rather big about the small forces at his disposal, and in one speech that he made he stated that he had won recruits even among the assistant masters at Eton, and mentioned names. This led to my receiving a letter from an old school-fellow, Dr. E. C. Selwyn, then Principal of Liverpool College, afterwards of Uppingham, insisting that I should repudiate Hyndman's statement on pain of being myself disowned by my friends; an amusing ultimatum which I mention merely to show the sort of feeling that was prevalent at that time. Another friend,

remonstrating with me on my association with *Justice*, remarked sadly: "Why do you want such a paper, when you've got your *Daily News*?"

I once lectured on "Liberty" before the Ascham Society, that select body of Eton masters, who were regarded as the intellectuals of Dr. Hornby's staff, "the Souls" (so to speak), or perhaps, as there has been mention of queer fish, I ought to spell it "the Soles." The next day one of the leading Liberals met me with the inquiry: "Well, did you establish Licence?" At the Eton of forty years ago, taking to drink was a much less serious offence than taking to think.

Shortly before I left Eton, one of the senior assistants, Mr. Arthur James, younger brother of "Stiggins," asked to have a word with me, and pointed out that, whereas during the previous ten years I had been doing good, solid, constructive work as a teacher, I was now about to undo and ruin it all by spreading abroad the mischievous and unpatriotic tenets of socialism. He spoke kindly, but with conviction. I was really left in no doubt as to the opinions of a public school on that subject.

Nor did it end with my departure from Eton; for many times in after years I have been entertained by getting retrospective glimpses into the public school mind. The one I most enjoyed was when an old Uppingham boy, Leonard Abbott,

came to tell me how, when he had been caught reading a socialist pamphlet in school, the Headmaster, my old friend, Dr. Selwyn, had given him a paternal "talking to," and, as a crowning proof of the folly of socialism, remarked: "In all my life I have only known two socialists, Joynes and Salt; and they both came to a bad end." Nothing could have been more conclusive than that.

I remember too with amusement the pious horror with which, nearly forty years ago, another friend heard me remark that I was acquainted with John Burns, who had been sentenced for the Trafalgar Square "riots." "But he's been in *prison*," he cried, with an emphasis on the fatal word, as if that settled the matter of itself. But now, owing to the suffragist campaign, and other social movements, even the stigma of prison has lost somewhat of its potency.[1]

But the orthodoxy of Eton got some severe shocks when Edward Lyttelton became Headmaster in succession to Dr. Warre; for not only was he a vegetarian, but he had a dangerous tendency to hear both sides on social questions, and there was one terrible occasion (February, 1908) when, as *The Eton College Chronicle* expressed it, "a working man, a person, too, of the

[1] Apropos of the Trafalgar Square incident, there is an amusing reference to John Burns and R. B. Cunninghame Graham, "comparatively mild offenders such as these agitators were," in Mr. Charles Kingston's *Famous Judges and Famous Trials*. (1923.)

blood-and-thunder type, almost an anarchist," was permitted to address the school on the subject of unemployment, standing on the Chapel steps in the School Yard. Upon which a correspondent, " One of many old Etonians," wrote thus to the school journal :

" May I trespass on your valuable space for the purpose of endorsing every sentiment expressed by your correspondent of last week on the subject of the desecration of the Chapel steps by the so-called representatives of the equally so-called unemployed ? Are we really to believe that, in all that large gathering of members of some of our best families, not one voice was raised in protest against the bullying extravagancies of—we cannot say workmen, for work they would not, if they could—uneducated beings of meaner intellect ? God help England in future ages and future emergencies, if it really was so ! "

This was comical enough ; yet it may be that socialism will some day find itself up against a difficult problem in dealing with this public school spirit ; for though these " old boys," as they like to call themselves, are very good fellows, none better, on cricket-ground or football-field, they are determined, where property is concerned, to hold on to " the good old rule, the simple plan," which has served them so well in the past ; and we may be sure that the lesson of Fascismo is not being overlooked.

As for the democratic spirit which we are told is permeating the schools, I doubt whether it means more than the talk about "good will" between employers and employed; a good will which is an indifferent substitute for good deeds. When I was an undergraduate at King's College, Cambridge, we had an annual cricket match with the college servants, and the game was followed by a dinner, at which, to show our good will towards the "uneducated beings of meaner intellect," we sat "in and out," undergraduates between servants, and servants between undergraduates. Doubtless the one party disliked it as much as the other; and the thought which alone sustained us was that the occasion, like Christmas, came but once in the year.

The true feeling of the public schools men in regard to socialism was probably expressed in a speech made by Sir G. du Maurier at a meeting of the Harrow Luncheon Club, when he expressed a wish "that Eton, Winchester, Charterhouse, and other great schools would follow the example of that club, and form a freemasonry which in these troubled times would create a sort of Ku-Klux-Klan of public school boys, which, when the Beacon flared on the Hill, would come down and restore England once more to law and order, and make her what she used to be and what she always should be, the pattern country of the world."[1]

[1] *The Morning Post*, July 13, 1923.

Thus, by the aid of a lunching (and punching) club, the public schools men are to save their country from the perils of nationalization. Socialism indeed stands reproved. But I am straying too far into modern times.

XXVIII

AT DRURY'S

BEFORE I attained to the dignity of a Boarding House at Eton, I lived for several years in a small house attached to the Rotunda at the foot of Keate's Lane, where the veteran Stephen Hawtrey had himself resided when he taught his "noble boys" in the disastrous manner already described. There was a pleasant garden at the back with a big walnut and some fine apple trees; but the Science Schools which had sprung up near the Rotunda were dreary buildings—so dreary as to inspire a new version of the opening lines in Gray's famous "Ode on a Distant View of Eton College":

> "Ye distant spires, ye antique towers,
> That crown the watery glade,
> Where grateful Science still adores
> Her Henry's holy shade."

It was no longer, as some wag pointed out, "her Henry's holy shade," but rather "her Huxley's shady hole," that grateful Science was adoring. The place is now the site of a Lower School Chapel.

The Boarding House to which I moved in due course was one well known in Eton annals as

"Drury's." "A happy boy at Drury's" had been Praed's description of himself in a much-quoted poem. It was a queer, rambling old place, long and low, with several doors that opened on to the main thoroughfare of Eton, and tortuous passages leading to out-of-the-way rooms which were quite puzzling to a new-comer. My friend and predecessor in the house, the Rev. D. C. Tovey, avowed to me that there were one or two rooms which he had never entered at all.

Lying, as it did, between, almost *under*, two large neighbouring houses, the little garden of "Drury's" was quite overshadowed, and was often a receptacle for various missiles discharged from the boys' windows. I remember, when a science lecture was announced on the interesting gealogical problem, "Will coal be found in the Thames Valley?" that I amused the Rev. H. Daman, who overlooked me on one side, by presenting him with some specimens which set the question at rest.

But it was not only into adjacent gardens that, under Hornby's listless régime, Eton boys were apt to throw things from their windows; the roads were not always immune from such bombardment, and passers-by had at times to walk with circumspection. It was said, I know not with what amount of truth, that some of the upper boys at Evans's House, in Keate's Lane, were especially skilled in this form of recreation. Nor, perhaps, was Eton in that respect peculiar

EDWARD CARPENTER
Author of *Towards Democracy*

[See p. 207

among public schools. William Morris used to have a similar story about his own school, Marlborough ; how on one occasion when a farmer and his friends, who were passing through the place, had been pelted from some windows, and had lodged a complaint with the Headmaster, the whole school was assembled, and the farmer was invited to state his grievance publicly. He began in these words, " As I and we were coming along, bloody civil . . ." at which the laughter was so great that the grave inquiry had to be abandoned. But school stories (except in this book) must of course be taken *cum grano*.

The front windows of Drury's commanded a good view of " the wall " ; not the structure that is famous as having given rise to a game of football peculiar to Eton, and not so charming as to be likely to tempt other schools to adopt it, but the low wall that divides the school buildings and School Yard from the road. It was of a height which afforded a comfortable seat for the boys, at times when it was their fashion to lounge there ; and there were occasions when it was not altogerthe pleasant for masters to pass that way, and to run the gauntlet of so many invasive eyes. I remember that A. C. Ainger once raised the question at a Masters' Meeting as to whether such big congregations of boys should be permitted there ; and how, when Warre had pooh-poohed the matter, and Hornby, as usual, would do nothing, he remarked that while a man of Warre's prestige

might doubtless pass and repass without being a mark for any disrespectful scrutiny, it was very different in the case of some junior or less distinguished master. From my study window at Drury's I once saw a member of Dr. Hornby's staff walking in front of the whole length of the wall, himself quite unconscious of the fact that a small boy, following at his heels, was derisively holding up the skirt of his gown in the character of train-bearer.

" Drury's " was pulled down, some years after I had left it, to make way for a School Library and Lecture Hall. It was perhaps time that the old house disappeared from the scene, for it was certainly showing signs of dilapidation in the early 'eighties ; and as for its blackbeetles, surely nowhere else can the floors of a room have so visibly *heaved,* when inspected at the midnight hour, as in the cellars of that famous old " Dame's House " where Praed spent a portion of his happy boyhood. I once had occasion to visit the scene, and was reminded of nothing so much as Wordsworth's daffodils :

> " Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
> Tossing their heads in sprightly dance."

It is to be hoped their descendants have not worked their way up into the imposing halls that have been erected above them !

XXIX

PARENTS

NEXT to the management of the Boy, the cult of the Parent is one of a schoolmaster's most important considerations. It is a fine art, in which some of my colleagues at Eton had become remarkably proficient. Parents and teachers do not always agree as fully as could be desired; for opinions as to the merits of the pupil are apt to vary, and in the case of smaller or poorer schools this not infrequently results in open discord. Eton parents, as a rule, were extremely pleasant and forbearing; partly, perhaps, because the great prestige of the school made the position of the masters more secure; it was *they* who conferred a favour by taking the pupil, rather than the Parents by placing him in their charge. Nevertheless, the transaction was one which, to insure harmonious relations, often called for much tact and diplomacy on the part of Dr. Hornby's assistants.

There were certain recognized and legitimate occasions for parents' visits to Eton, such as the Fourth of June, when it was open house for them everywhere; when, however, they came at the busier crises of the school-time, their appearance

was less relished by those whose function it was to entertain them, or to discuss the progress of the Boy. What was most dreaded, and not without some reason, was a Resident Parent—one who either lived, or lodged for a time, in the neighbourhood. I remember that when I first went to Eton as a boy, my mother stayed several days at a hotel in Windsor; from which stronghold she made descents upon my unfortunate tutor, Warre-Cornish, until he, the mildest of men, after sitting silent for some minutes, suddenly asked her, with despair in his voice: "Mrs. Salt, *when* are you going away?" Worse than this, she called on the Headmaster, the grave and stately Dr. Balston, and asked him to give me "leave" to spend an afternoon with her in Windsor. His reply was: "Madam; your son has been at the school just two days, and you are already asking 'leave' for him. He may have it." When I heard from my mother of these two interviews, I little thought that the time would ever come when I should realize the Master's view of such questions.

Parents varied greatly. As a rule they were thankful, mothers especially, if the tutor was able to avert, or to mitigate, any severe punishment with which the boy was threatened; but, in one case, the mother of a boy in my House, a troublesome but not bad boy, was very anxious that he should be flogged, and urged me to take the very earliest opportunity for "complaining of him." This I declined to do, as his faults were not of so

serious a kind as to warrant such a step ; and as she persisted rather rudely in her demand, I suggested that, if she felt dissatisfied, she might move him to another House. She did so ; but whether the change enabled her to effect her motherly purpose I never heard or inquired.

Pious Parents used to be seriously dreaded by certain Eton masters who were themselves lacking in orthodoxy. I was told by a colleague, one who held a good position on the staff, that having been asked to prepare a pupil for Confirmation he felt bound, as a matter of conscience, to make avowal to the father of his own heretical views. With some apprehension he began to speak on the subject, when, to his surprise and relief, the Parent —who, it appeared, had been equally afraid of *him*—grasped him warmly by the hand, and assured him that he held the same views himself, but that the boy's mother wanted " to have it done." Thus was honesty rewarded, and a genial understanding secured !

The Pompous Parent was rare. Once, when I was quite a junior master, I was assured by a patronizing father, a banker, that he would not have thought of sending his son to so young a tutor as myself, had I not been highly recommended by Mr. ——. This seemed to me at the time to be rather a tactless way of expressing what had better have been left unsaid ; but it was the only instance of the kind that I remember during the ten years of my mastership. Luckily, I did

not tell the man, as I might well have done, to go elsewhere ; for the boy turned out to be a very good and pleasant fellow.

But I once lost a prospective pupil by being too candid in my replies to an Inquiring Parent, a mother who wanted to consult me as to my opinion of the Eton system of education. I told her what I thought of it, and I did not hear from her again. I presume she found some other tutor who was either a true believer or a diplomatist of greater skill than mine.

The Aristocracy, in all its aspects, was studied with care and attention by some Eton masters, so that they were in no danger of being at fault if suddenly confronted by a titled person. Through lack of such precautions, I once found myself very nearly in an awkward predicament, when I had a call from a most courteous visitor who wished to enter his son as my pupil. I asked his name, and he said what to my uninstructed ear sounded like " Pork." I suppose he saw my embarrassment ; for he quickly gave me the correct spelling. He was the Hon. Mr. Palk, afterwards the second Baron Haldon.

Sisters were an agreeable variation, at times, from Parents ; but, even with them, misunderstandings were apt to arise unless alertness were maintained. A well-known Eton master, one of my oldest colleagues, was said to have made the strange mistake of supposing that two rather fashionable young ladies, who called at his house,

were working-girls known to his daughter. Coming into the room, he greeted them kindly, and remarked how nice it was that they were able to spend their Saturday afternoon together. They looked surprised; but his daughter," rushing to the rescue," prevented further mishaps.

After all, it was largely to their pupils that masters owed the uniformly good behaviour of the Parent. " The boy is father of the man " ; and Eton boys, being anxious that their " people " should so conduct themselves as to do " the right thing," did not often allow " the governor " to be too much of a burden to " me tutor." But in this matter my recollections do not tally with those of Mr. A. M. Goodhart, an Eton master who was reported as saying (in 1924) that in bygone days Eton boys almost apologized for the presence of their relatives.

" Formerly a boy was almost ashamed to meet his people down here, and used to say, ' It's an awful nuisance, because my people are down.' Now you may see boys walking up and down the street arm-in-arm with their mother or sisters, not in the least ashamed of showing their natural affection."

Certainly the Parents, as we saw them at Eton, did not often correspond to the parental type sometimes depicted by preachers in the College Chapel, when attempts were made to soften the hearts of the boys by an appeal to their filial feelings. Those staid and careworn fathers, those

devout mothers, whose grey hairs would go down in sorrow to the grave, if their boys were to quit the paths of rectitude, were hardly to be recognized in the actual visitors to Eton. It was quite a different sort of Parent that a tutor expected, when a pupil said to him: "Please, sir, may I have leave to-morrow? My people are coming down."

XXX

CONFESSIONS OF AN ETON MASTER

SUCH was the title of an article that appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* magazine in January, 1885. I remember that one critic remarked that the writer did not *confess* so much as *profess ;* and perhaps there was truth in the observation. The article was, in fact, a statement of the reasons, or of one of the reasons, for which I was leaving Eton, and which had brought me to a decision over which I had been pondering for some time. I had lost all belief in the Eton system of education—the "tutorial system," as it was called—and in addition to that, I had so far wandered from the Eton fold as to become a socialist, a vegetarian, and a free-thinker. Clearly the time had come when for my own sake, as well as that of the school, a change was to be desired.[1]

Yet it was not so easy to make the change ; for, apart from the question of salary, I had good friends among my colleagues at Eton from whom I was loath to part ; my old school-fellow

[1] Among several valued friendships which I made in the early 'eighties was that with Mr. Howard Williams, now a nonagenarian, and intellectually as alert as ever, whose book on *The Ethics of Diet* had a strong and liberating influence on me.

R. C. Radcliffe, for instance; together with others such as E. S. Shuckburgh, D. C. Tovey, H. G. Wintle, J. D. Bourchier, E. L. Vaughan, and Henry Broadbent, now Librarian of the College. So I lingered on for a year or so in doubt. I think what finally decided me to go was that when Dr. Hornby gave up the headmastership in 1884 the appointment fell, not as some of us hoped, to Dr. J. E. C. Welldon, but to Dr. Edmond Warre. I foresaw what that implied for Eton, and sent in my resignation, that it might take effect at the end of the year, telling Dr. Warre that as I had lost faith in the Eton system I thought it better not to remain. In reply he wrote most kindly that he was sorry for the reason, as well as for the fact of my intended departure, but that in such a case I was doubtless doing the right thing.

Three months later, when, as the Christmas holidays approached, I took formal leave of Dr. Warre, he said to me gravely, in sorrow more than anger, "It's the vegetarianism, I fear"; by which he meant that it was my change of diet that had so enfeebled me as to lead to a loss of belief in an Eton education. I mentioned socialism as perhaps an auxiliary cause; at which he threw up his hands and cried: "Socialism! Then blow us up, blow us up! There's nothing left for it but that." Such, in those days, was a Headmaster's idea of socialism. But his kindness was still unchanged; and he expressed his willingness

to procure me a post as an assistant teacher at a "crammer's," an offer which I gratefully declined.

Meantime—and this brings me back to the title of the present chapter—I had written an article on the system of education at Eton, which, through the services of my friend, Mr. Kegan Paul, then publisher of the *Nineteenth Century*, had been accepted by Sir James Knowles, the editor, and was already in the printer's hands. I felt rather remorseful at the thought of this bombshell being exploded immediately after my departure; but it was a case of

Semper ego auditor tantum; nunquamne reponam?

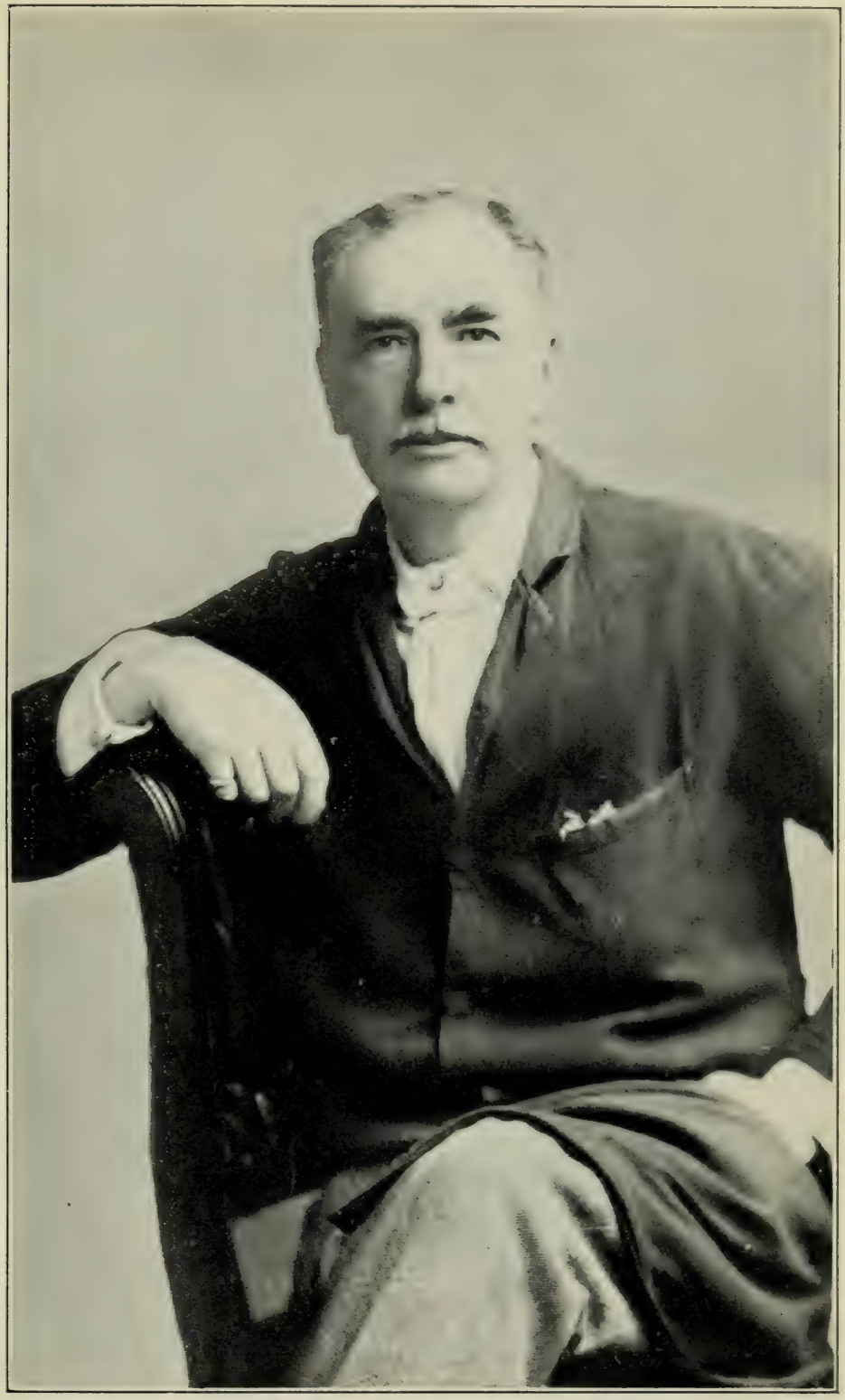
and, as I have said, the article duly appeared in the course of the holidays. I quote half a page of it, as a sample of its drift.

"The seventy Collegers and a handful of industrious Oppidans may keep up appearances by gaining university scholarships and the like, but the rank and file of the school are hopelessly and irretrievably unintellectual. They know little; they hate books; they regard scholars with good-humoured indifference or neglect; they worship athletes with an ever-increasing veneration: to mention the Newcastle scholar of the current year would be to the majority a painful effort of memory; the Captain of the Boats, or the Captain of the Eleven, is a deity ever present before their minds. I protest that in my experience of Eton I have known nothing so sad as to watch the gradual

process of deterioration in the industry of a new boy. For the first fortnight or so all is perfection ; the boy is punctual, diligent, eager to do his work conscientiously ; then comes a period when he begins to look about him, and to note with a mild surprise the indifference of other boys to their lessons, and the inability of the masters to enforce thorough diligence ; finally he yields to the temptation that everywhere surrounds him, eats of the forbidden fruit of the Tree of Knowledge (or rather Ignorance), and gradually sinks into a state of mental inactivity.

"An amusing story used to be told of two brothers, members of a well-known Etonian family (the Lubbocks), which, whether apocryphal or not, will serve to illustrate what I have been saying. The *major* was being severely rated by his tutor on account of his idleness at Eton, and his more industrious *minor* was held up as at once a pattern and reproof. This unjust aggravation of an admitted offence was more than he could bear, and he hurriedly and earnestly pleaded, in perfect simplicity, and confident of thus instantly righting his injured reputation, that his *minor* had only lately entered the school, while he had been an Etonian some years. 'The last shall be the first, and the first last,' is a prophecy which at Eton has its daily fulfilment."

The *Confessions* were widely noticed in the Press, and led to a discussion in the *Nineteenth Century* itself, in which two Eton masters, Mr.



HOWARD WILLIAMS, M.A.
Author of *The Ethics of Diet*

[See p. 225 (note)

G. E. Marindin and my former tutor Mr. F. W. Cornish, took part. Mr. Cornish afterwards told me that the longer he considered what I had written about Eton, the more inclined he felt to agree with it.

What Dr. Warre thought of it I never heard, till his *Life* was published nearly thirty years later by an old school-fellow of mine, Mr. C. R. L. Fletcher; and then—imagine the shock I received when I read this extract from his diary!

"*January 1st*, 1885. Read (Salt's) article in the *Nineteenth Century* against tutorial system. Spiteful in tone? A little indecent in haste?"

To this Mr. Fletcher (who mercifully suppressed my name in his citation from the diary) appended a note of his own: "It is poor fissenless stuff for the most part, but there are one or two sensible ideas in it. There is certainly no attack on the Headmaster." From that supreme irreverence I stood acquitted, but at the cost of having written poor fissenless stuff. What most interested me was Dr. Warre's characteristic assumption that there must be spitefulness, or indecent haste, in a criticism of a system of which *he* stood as the protagonist.

As for the old Eton system, it would be a waste of time to reaffirm what I said. Let me quote a sentence from Lord Ullswater's *A Speaker's Commentaries* (I. 34): "Looking back now, at this

distance of time, upon my Eton experiences (1868–), I cannot but think that in many respects the educational system then obtaining was deficient in many particulars. Too much time was devoted to games, at the expense of study; there was no attempt, or very little, at giving any religious education, or inculcating any moral principles."

What would Dr. Warre have said to that?

XXXI

"LATIN AS SHE IS SPOKE"

AMONG the events of the bygone Eton of which I have written, none is more clearly remembered than the outcry caused by the introduction of "modern languages" by Dr. Hornby, who was at first viewed as a dangerous innovator. "No reform!" was for a time the slogan of the Eton boy (and the secret hope of not a few of the masters), and was even chalked visibly on the doors and hoardings; but when Dr. Hornby's innovations had been carried into effect, we discovered to our satisfaction that they did not seriously imperil our peace of mind

Far greater would have been our concern had we been able to foresee the order of the Board of Education that secondary schools should adopt the reformed pronunciation of Latin, as approved by the philological societies and other learned bodies; for the prospect of having to unlearn what he had already learnt at the cost of much labour was not likely to be very warmly welcomed, either by the typical boy or by the typical master. I understand that up to the present, except in the Headmaster's division, Eton has been able to maintain the old time-honoured

pronunciation; so it is naturally a satisfaction to me to reflect that in the remainder of this chapter, which is quoted from an article that appeared many years ago in a London paper,[1] I correctly interpreted the feeling of the Eton which I knew.

"Consider the position of the English schoolboy in relation to this reform. He has been drilled and drubbed for centuries ('lexicon-struck in early youth' is Sydney Smith's description of him) into a sort of a knowledge of Latin; and the one alleviation of his sorrow has been that he has at least been allowed to pronounce this foreign language after the fashion of his native speech. At least, the Roman invasion has taken on an Anglo-Saxon garb. What, then, will be his consternation when he finds that, by a despotic ukase of the educational authorities, all this is to be changed, and that he must henceforth not only devote to the study of Latin valuable time which is sorely needed for the cricket-field or the gymnasium, but by a refinement of tyranny must pronounce the enforced lessons in an accent that appears to him to be both outlandish and absurd.

"Nay, more, his domestic affections will be outraged, and his schoolboy nature wounded in its tenderest part; for the order of the Board of Education contains a special instruction that in no case can any system of pronunciation be tolerated in which proper attention is not given

[1] The *Morning Leader*, 1907.

to quantity—in which, for instance, păter is pronounced as pāter, or bŏnus as bōnus. When it is understood that the self-respecting English schoolboy will no longer be able to speak of his father as 'the pāter,' or of his younger brother as 'the mīnor,' or to indite the customary 'vāle' upon leaving his school, it will be realized how great a blow has been struck at the liberty of the subject in this educational decree. Is 'pāter Æneas' to be no longer a household word among the students of Virgil? Perish the thought!

"Nor is the outrage merely a personal one; for there is a patriotic side to this question which the schoolboy will not allow to be overlooked, and which may be commended to the notice of those watchful journals which have the honour of the English race in their sole charge. It has hitherto been held to be a sacred truth that the Anglo-Saxon tongue will eventually dominate the globe; and herein is ample justification for the practice in use at our schools of pronouncing Latin in the broadest Anglo-Saxon accent. The Anglo-Saxon speech has swallowed up the speech of Rome. Must we now truckle to the Latin races by this base surrender? The Eton boy will certainly regard the new order as akin to the dangerous project of the Channel tunnel and all such unpatriotic schemes.

"Nor will he be appeased by the wily suggestion of the Board that if a standard pronunciation becomes universal, anyone who has not adopted

it at school will be placed at a disadvantage, and that it is therefore very desirable that 'even at the cost of some temporary additional effort' he should acquire the reformed style of speech. For the Eton schoolboy, according to his own conviction, is already devoting to these studies the maximum of available time, and to ask him to make 'additional' efforts—at the very season when cricket is about to recommence—is, to say the least of it, inopportune.

"In these circumstances the eyes of schoolboys everywhere will turn anxiously to those great public schools which are not directly subject to the decrees of a tyrannical Board. What will be done by Eton, Harrow, Winchester, Rugby, etc., to defend and perpetuate the rights of the Anglo-Saxon youth? Can we trust them to do their duty at this grave crisis, as other oppressed nationalities have done, to safeguard the use of their mother-tongue and to resist the incursion of the foreign accent?

"From my own knowledge of Eton, I should not be surprised to learn that whatever the Head-master may privately think, he had been compelled by sheer force of Etonian opinion to put himself at the head of a great patriotic movement to retain the English pronunciation of Latin, and to save pāter Æneas, and the rest of our time-honoured educational Penates, from the exile with which they are threatened. In that event, even if the majority of schools succumb, we may

see the inspiring sight of Eton, and a few other great seats of learning, standing firm, like oases of Anglo-Saxondom in a desert of Latinity, against the prevalent fashion. I would venture to predict that it will be a case of

> Et cuncta terrarum subacta,
> Præter atrocem animum Catonis.

When all the rest of the world is pronouncing Latin correctly, there will remain a few strongholds among our English public schools where păter will still be pāter, where bŏnus will be bōnus, and where there will still be a cry of deo grātias that Englishmen are not as other men are."

XXXII

AN ETON SENNACHERIB

I HAVE spoken of the Boarding-House once famous as "Drury's," and of other old buildings which have long disappeared from the Eton of my memories. Their removal was not effected without protest; and, strange to say, it was Dr. Warre himself, that pillar of the Eton constitution, whose activities as destroyer and rebuilder first invited the storm. It was in the 'eighties, some three years after I had given up my mastership, that the trouble about the new buildings arose. I quote from an article which I contributed at the time to a journal edited by Mr. William Stead, whose watchful eye even then missed nothing that concerned what he used to chronicle magniloquently as "The progress of the World."

"We know from history that almost all despotic rulers have left, or have desired to leave, monumental records of their reign; and Dr. Warre, the present Etonian autocrat, is proving himself to be no exception to the rule. He is, however, under one serious disadvantage in comparison with his predecessors of Assyria, Egypt, and other ancient dynasties, for he is hampered by a Governing

Body, and Governing Bodies were fortunately unknown to Sennacherib, Cheops, and the great builders of antiquity. If we take this limitation into account, and also remember that Eton is traditionally and characteristically an unfavourable place for the speedy execution of plans, we shall be the better able to do justice to the promptness and determination by which Dr. Warre has already carried several architectural schemes into effect since his accession to the headmastership of Eton in 1884.

"It was in 1885 that public attention was first called to Dr. Warre's intended operations, the cry of 'Vandalism at Eton' being raised in the public press, when it was discovered that the Headmaster's house in Weston's Yard, one of the oldest and most beautiful buildings at Eton, was in danger of being demolished in order to make room for a new and more commodious residence. Among the many protests made against this desecration, the most remarkable was a work issued from the Eton press under the title of *Some Views and Opinions of Sparrow on Housetops*, an exceedingly amusing and valuable brochure, which was generally attributed to one of the Eton masters, or 'Beaks,' if I may be allowed to use a schoolboy phrase, which in this case seems to be specially appropriate.[1] The danger was happily averted by the public outcry, and less objectionable sites have since been found for the new buildings which the

[1] It was written by Mr. H. E. Luxmoore.

modern requirements of the school are considered to have made necessary. A wing has been added to the College Buildings in Weston's Yard, which are now wholly devoted to the use of the seventy King's scholars, the school library having been been moved from its old quarters in Weston's Yard to a more central position.

"But the most important changes are those which are now being carried out in Keate's Lane, on the site of the old Mathematical schools, which have been pulled down, or are on the point of being pulled down, to make room for a new quadrangle. Among the doomed buildings is the Rotunda, or Museum as it has of late years been called, round which, though it cannot claim indulgence on the score of age or architectural value, many pleasant associations have gathered during the last thirty or forty years. It was built by the late Rev. Stephen Hawtrey, and was for many years the head-quarters of mathematical teaching at Eton; and there must be many old Etonians who cherish a vivid recollection of Mr. Hawtrey's venerable and animated appearance, as, standing in the centre of the Rotunda, he enthusiastically dilated on the glories of some favourite proposition. The Rotunda was also used on festive occasions for theatrical performances, in the days when theatricals were still permitted at Eton, and the representations there given of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Critic*, and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* still live in the memory of those who

THE ROUND SCHOOL
(From the garden)

witnessed them. During the last seven or eight years, since new mathematical schoolrooms have been erected in another part of Eton, the Rotunda has been used as a Museum ; but now alas ! it is in the hands of the destroyers, and a quadrangle is shortly to take its place. Thus the words of Horace seem to find a fresh illustration in Dr. Warre's architectural changes :

Diruit, ædificat, mutat quadrata Rotundis.

The new buildings are to consist of schoolrooms, a museum, drawing schools, a physical laboratory, and in addition to these a Lower Chapel and lecture hall, the expenses of the two last-named being defrayed partly by private subscription, as the Governing Body could not bring themselves to go the full length of Dr. Warre's enthusiasm. It is matter for regret that a splendid walnut tree which stood near the Rotunda has had to be sacrificed ; but it was doubtless felt that an occasional shower of walnuts would have a demoralizing effect upon the boys' studies, as in the case of the performing monkeys in the fable.

" In conclusion, let us turn from this spectacle of destruction and reconstruction to let our eyes rest for a moment on that part of Eton College which is more suggestive of stability and repose. The cloisters and Fellows' buildings have long been the Elysium of the Provost and Fellows, the happy resting-place where the more fortunate *emeriti* of Eton masters have lived out the close of their lives

in blissful quiet and retirement. Here in secluded gardens and meadows sloping down to the Thames they roamed secure, and meditated calmly on their past struggles with that enemy of all true repose—the schoolboy. But even here innovation has begun to set its foot ; for, as fellowships are no longer awarded, the happy band is sorely diminished in numbers, and the vacant cloister houses have in some cases even endured the habitation of outsiders. But though the Fellows' buildings have been invaded by others than Fellows, the privilege of entry into the sacred gardens has not always been simultaneously conceded ; and the sight has been witnessed of a disconsolate inhabitant of the cloisters looking longingly from his windows, like a Peri at the gates of Paradise, on the tempting lawns and orchard grounds where neither he nor his children might set foot. Thus, in the ceaseless struggle between old and new, it is seen that the old does not always yield place unavenged."

XXXIII

THE *BEAGLER BOY*

THE subject of this chapter belongs to a somewhat later date than that of bygone Eton, yet is not irrelevant to my story, for even in the 'seventies discussions had begun to arise concerning the morality of that "old Eton institution," as Dr. Warre called it, the Eton hare-hunt. I remember how Herbert Carpenter, the science master, once asked me to go with him to Dr. Hornby to draw his attention to some unpleasant and "unsportsmanlike" incident that had occurred with the Beagles, and how the Headmaster explained to us that, as *all* hunting is cruel, he could not possibly take any action that would restrict the liberties of the boys. Even as we emerged from Dr. Hornby's door, we were met by another master, the Rev. C. L. Lovett-Cameron, our senior by a good many years, who, having got wind of our business with the Head, had come to point out to us what an impertinence it was, on our part, to offer any criticism of the hunt. Needless to add, he was himself in the habit of following it on horseback.

Cruel pastimes had long been practised at Eton. "About Whitsuntide, I think on Holy

Tuesday, the schoolboyes doe hunte a Ram, till they kill him, and then they have a venison feast made of him." Such is the pleasant practice recorded in the manuscript *Remaines of J. Aubrey*, dated 1688. It was doubtless, from those rare old times, that the hare-hunt was a survival; and, though it is now conducted in what is called a "sportsmanlike" manner, this was not the case at a date no more remote than the headmastership of Dr. Balston, when, as we learn from Brinsley-Richards's *Seven Years at Eton* (1857–1864), the Beagles "were often made to hunt a miserable trapped fox that had lost one of its pads." Even now, it is difficult to see much "fair play" in a sport which consists in pursuing a small panic-stricken animal over a country which is largely intersected by paths, roads, railway lines, allotment gardens, nursery gardens, and wire fences, where the quarry is in continual danger of being headed back or hung up. It is not, however, of the hare-hunt itself that I would now speak, but of the hoax that was practised on the young sportsmen and their friends.

If ever a hoax be justifiable, it is (as I have said in reference to "the Bogus Solomon") when practised on those selfish persons who seek their own pleasure at the cost of a fellow-being's pain. In that sense the *Beagler Boy* was a hoax; but it was also a scientific experiment, devised by two Old Etonian members of the Humanitarian League as a measure of the folly to which sportsmen are

prepared to go in their defence of hunting. Is there a limit to their absurdity on this subject? or is it, like some fabled ocean, unfathomable? That was the problem which the *Beagler Boy* was intended to solve.

There was published, in February, 1907, the first number of the *Beagler Boy*, a journal "conducted by Old Etonians" (Sir George Greenwood and myself), which announced its "mission" to be the saving from extinction of "a gallant school sport," to wit, the hunting of hares by the Eton College Beagles. From the first line to the last, it was a tissue of the most idiotic balderdash and fustian that could be collected in defence of beagling; and not only that, for it incidentally brought together all the more damaging and discreditable facts and references that had been recorded against the school hunt in the course of a long controversy. It contained, in brief, everything that an intelligent supporter of the Beagles would have desired to let alone; and the question which the editors had set themselves was simply this—how far, in sheer ineptitude, *could* they go, in this *reductio ad absurdum*, without the hoax being discovered by the self-styled "practical" persons who look upon humanitarians as sentimentalists. On the very eve of publication, we were warned by friends who had read the proof-sheets that we had overshot the mark; that, however foolish some sportsmen might be, such a monstrous farrago of nonsense as this could not

possibly escape detection. Still, we determined to try.

Let me give an example. The *Beagler Boy*, after stating and explaining its "mission," dwelt at some length upon the "Scriptural Sanction for Beagling" and the "Imperial Aspects" of the sport. Under the second of these two heads, it referred to certain "Unworthy attempts that had been made to discredit the Britannia Beagles, the pack kept by the Royal Naval College," by a citation of the following incident, quoted from the *Naval and Military Record* of March 1, 1906:

"Just outside the covert a hare was moved in the ploughing by hounds and gave a most exciting chase around two fields, and when killed was found to have only three legs."

Not exactly the sort of achievement upon which a sportsman would choose to dilate! This, however, is what the *Beagler Boy* had to say of it:

"The point of the criticism appears to be that it is demoralizing for naval cadets to find excitement in the chase of a partially crippled animal. We prefer to look at the incident in a saner and more humorous spirit, and see in it an early lesson in that art of cheerily *making the best of things*, which is so characteristic of our British sailors. A hare with only three legs would be regarded by some persons as insufficiently equipped for the chase; but to these fine, sanguine young fellows, already trained to be equal to any emergency, and to 'make a little go a long way,' even a

three-legged hare is the means of providing true sport."

This sample will suffice. The *Beagler Boy* was received with acclamation by Eton boys and by their friends in sporting circles as a genuine exponent of that manly spirit which makes England what she is. Its career, brilliant, though brief—it went through two numbers—was quite a romance. Private letters of congratulation, addressed to the Editors, were full of rich reading ; for among them were offers of co-operation made by accomplished journalists, and sympathetic communications from masters of schools where beagles had once been kept. In the general Press, the skit was, of course, quickly detected, and caused not a little entertainment ; but what Dr. Warre, then Provost of Eton, thought of the figure cut by their allies, has never been recorded. The hoax was a good example of " the biter bit."

The *Beagler Boy* was included by Lord Harcourt, who much enjoyed the joke, in his collection of books and pamphlets about Eton, which, at a later date, he presented to the College. " I remember you very well," he wrote to me in 1914, " and, as you say, I was once in your division, but happily, like yourself, I have forgotten whether I approved of you, or you of me ! I am delighted to have your information about the *Beagler Boy*. I had no idea that you kept such good company as my friend G. G. Greenwood ; but anyhow I maintain my Eton Collection very carefully, and

I am glad to include in it your joint practical joke."

As to the company kept by me, it has been, I am glad to think, very varied; but certainly none gives me greater pleasure to recall than that of my friend Sir George Greenwood, who combines in a rather rare degree two qualities that do not always go together, a wide scholarship and a keen sense of humour. Whether the *Beagler Boy* still holds an honoured place in the Eton archives, or has been discarded as too irreverent, I have never ventured to inquire, but I am inclined to fear the worst. For the Beagles are not yet among the Bygones.

SIR GEORGE GREENWOOD

XXXIV

THE CULT OF QUEER FISH

AT Eton, as the reader will have perceived, we studied our odd fish with a diligence seldom bestowed on Greek and Latin; and in the matter of fishing-grounds we could hardly have been more fortunate, for there are few better-stocked waters, few more teeming ponds and rivers, than at a great public school. All was fish that came to our net in those days, and much of it was very queer fish. I must avow that it is mainly to Eton that I owe my interest in a sport which has a much better claim than angling to be called the "gentle craft" or "the contemplative man's recreation," to wit, the pursuit not of the finny tribes, but of the human flat and flounder.

But here a word must be said from the point of view of the fishes. It is perhaps somewhat of a libel upon them that they should be thus used, in our proverbial saying, as emblems of the Queer; a thought expressed by Leigh Hunt in his poem, "The Fish, the Man, and the Spirit," where the Man, after making merry at the grotesque appearance and fixed stare of the fishes,

> "Dreary-mouthed, gaping wretches of the sea,
> Gulping salt water everlastingly,"

finds himself in turn regarded with no less astonishment, and confronted with the suggestion that the Fish's stare was originally caused by the shock of seeing such an " amazing monster " as Man.[1]

However that may be, the cult of Queer Fish has long been, to me, a much more attractive pastime than the practice of angling, upon which so much false sentiment has been bestowed by interested writers. There is such a charm about fish in their native element, or even as seen in an aquarium, that it is strange to give the title of " gentle craft " to the rather callous sport of hooking and " playing " them. Mankind, if it were sensible, would go to the fish, as the sluggard is counselled to go to the ant, to study their estimable qualities; to feed its eyes, not its stomach on them; for great benefit may be derived, in times of stress and anxiety, from a contemplation of their sang-froid and composure.

I had an experience of this, which I have never forgotten, at the time of Queen Victoria's funeral, when, happening to be in Brighton, I was at a loss where to take refuge during that distressful hour of publicly enjoined mourning; until, seeing the Aquarium open, and at a charge of sixpence only, I found sanctuary there, and had the exhibition entirely to myself. From the restless and fevered mood which reigned outside, the change to the

[1] The exclamation " Oddsfish ! " so liberally attributed by Scott and other writers to Charles II, would thus, icthyologically considered, be more properly converted into " Oddsman ! "

cool demeanour and complete insouciance of the fish was very refreshing; they were, as usual, circumnavigating the tanks in an orderly procession, and each fish, as he passed, seemed to give me an unconcerned yet half-significant and reassuring glance for which I could not but feel grateful.

So let Fish and Human divide between them the honours of the Queer. Once when I was walking with a school-fellow through some private grounds near Eton—I think it was at Beaumont College—we passed a fish-pond where some big carp, reclining in shallow water by the margin, regarded us with so quaint an eye that my companion, who was in an humorous mood, declared that he could not be satisfied until he had made closer acquaintance with creatures who looked at him so oddly: thereupon he rushed into the water, reckless of a wetting, and seized one of them in his arms. A prolonged struggle ensured; but in the end the carp, by his invincible slipperiness, won the day, and plunged back after his fellows. "That was a queer fish," said my friend. I had to remind him that he was one also.

We Collegers regarded this Cult of Queer Fish not as an amusement only, but as an art and a science, in which, to secure the finest fish, we had to know the most productive waters and the most favourable seasons: it was vain to throw the line at random and expect to take a prize. There was a warning in some verses composed by my

friend C. C. Thornton, when an epigram, a minor form of punishment then in vogue, was demanded of him by Sixth Form :

> " The Tishbite Elijah
> Went to fish in a pie-jar ;
> But Elijah the Tishbite
> Could not make the fish bite."

But with the discretion and skill that we used, the fish would bite freely, and we realized the truth of Horace's remark : " More tunnies will swim in, and your fishponds will increase." And though some of the many which we landed slipped back into the waters of oblivion, even as the big carp did when grasped by my school-fellow—it being as difficult to hold some fish in the memory as in the hand—there were still a number left of whom, as the reader will have seen, I have kept a lively remembrance.

These anecdotes, be it remarked, are to be regarded not as " fish-stories," in the American sense of that term—yarns spun with a mixture of much fiction and little fact—but as records of actual experience in the cult of the human Queer. The privilege is commonly granted to fishermen of gossiping artlessly about their " catches " ; and I even venture to hope that there may be found in this narrative something of that pensiveness and Arcadian simplicity which is supposed, very doubtfully, to mark the literature of Angling.

At any rate, the specimens here presented are

not "potted," as for the larder, nor stuffed "trophies," like those ghastly wall-ornaments that one sometimes shudders at, in the shape of a big fish, a pike perhaps, framed in a glass case, and leering out with glassy eye upon its whilom captor, the old retired angler who sits in the arm-chair below. These trophies are incorporeal ones; it is in a mental aquarium, kept fresh and unsullied in thought, that the student of Queer Fish, when his days of activity are over, finds his recompense and recreation. Then, whatever troubles old age may bring him, he can draw inner solace from the memories which he has stored—his abundant harvest of the deep—a shoal of freaks and follies, antics and curiosities, which ply a spiritual but not less active fin. Thus companioned, he is a Proteus, a sea-god, reclining on the shore of the gulf that he has traversed, and contentedly recounting his quaint and curious herds.

Above all, this delectable pastime, be it observed, is not stained by any barbarity. There is here no impaling of frog or worm "as if you loved him"; indeed, the very object of the fishery is not to destroy but to save. It may be objected, perhaps, that to make sport of an odd fish is itself a kind of inhumanity, comparable to what is known as "playing" a salmon or a trout. But the case is essentially different; for whereas angling is necessarily cruel in all its details, the study of human oddity can be, and is, entirely free from

unkindness, and pursued in a manner that gives no pain to those concerned.

I am confident that there is no lack of consideration in my treatment of these Queer Fish, with whom I have myself the sympathy that comes of long companionship and understanding, amounting indeed to a sense of close kinship. I have always admired the injunction: "Be kind to animals, for you are one yourself"; and that is the spirit in which these reminiscences have been written, with the result, I hope, that, as Byron said (in a rather different connection):

"Morals were better, and the fish no worse."

To what, indeed, at the close of life, next to the blessing of remembered friendships, can one so surely look for comfort as to the minor, but not-to-be-forgotten talisman of laughter? "Shaken with inward laughter" is the stage-direction given more than once by Ibsen to the old and dying hero of what I think is his greatest Play: *John Gabriel Borkman*. And laughter, at least, need never be lacking to a retired Fisherman of the Queer.

XXXV

IN PIAM MEMORIAM

IT was the custom on Founder's Day, at Eton, for a massive silver goblet to be carried round the Hall by one of the aged Fellows who then constituted the Governing Body, and handed in turn to each of us Collegers as we stood in line awaiting him. With the words *In piam memoriam,* we took a draught of wine as deep as the venerable cup-bearer permitted, but here our hopes were usually frustrated by the hand that all too soon would draw the chalice back.

In this book, I have drunk deep, and without hindrance, of the wine of pious memory ; and not, I trust, the less piously because I have dwelt upon the humorous no less than the serious features of the period which I recall. For who will assert that those who have seen and smiled at the incongruities and anomalies of the old Eton system are proved thereby to have less regard for their school ? Eton surely is strong enough to bear such comment ; for it is not in the maintenance of antique and often foolish institutions that the greatness of a public school consists, but in what a poet has called " the genius to be

loved,"[1] the lasting tie of affection with which its children are bound ; and that is a quality of Eton to which, as the reader will admit, I am not backward in bearing witness.

And here let me say—lest it be thought that I have dwelt too much on certain amusing aspects of my school-fellows—that those early friendships are among the most valued possessions of life. They have a peculiar vitality which no separation, however lengthy, in later years can weaken ; a genuineness which no differences of opinions or of social rank can affect ; and they are remembered when scores of the later-made acquaintances of middle-age have run their course and been forgotten. They belong to a bygone time, but themselves can never be bygone ; and if one speaks little of them, it is only because one feels the more. Whatever else may fail, the memories of school friendships will be among those that abide :

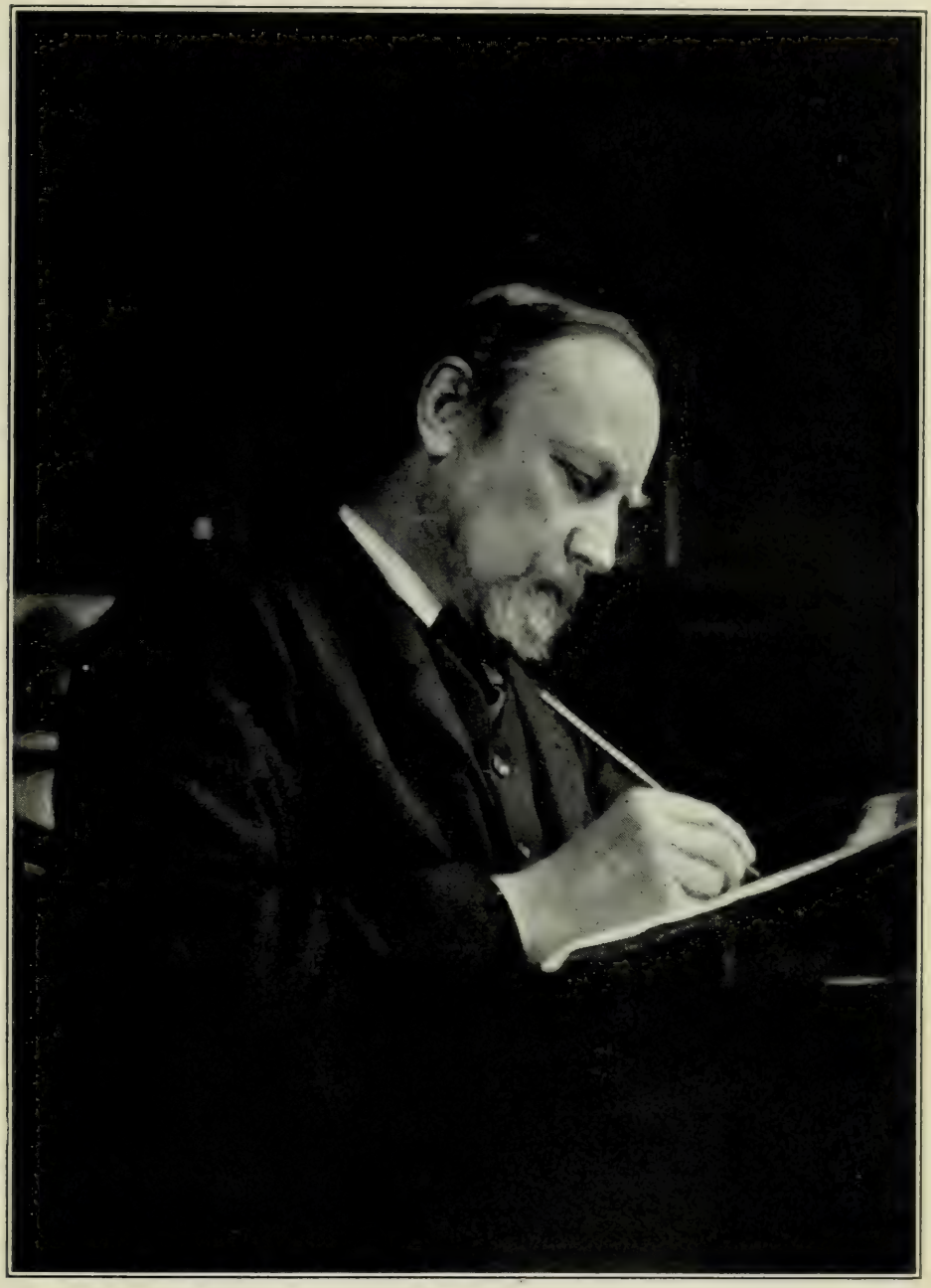
Dum memor ipse mei, dum spiritus hos regit artus.[2]

I had an instance of this within the last few years : when, meeting an old Eton school-fellow, a retired Haileybury master, whom I had not seen for over half a century, we resumed acquaintance on the former footing as easily as if we had been next-door neighbours all the time.

Departure from the school used to be regarded by some of us as a sort of death. Searching lately

[1] Mrs. E. B. Browning ; in her poem, " Crowned and Buried."

[2] Which may be translated :
While memory lasts ; while life still stirs this frame.



PIOUS MEMORIES

among old and forgotten papers, I found a faded copy of a sonnet which I wrote, between fifty and sixty years ago, "Before leaving Eton"; and though I am aware that its poetry by no means matches its piety, I will venture to quote from it here as at least a relic from Bygone Eton, and an illustration of my theme. Commencing with a reference to the fanciful belief that drowning sailors have a sudden vision of the past events of their lives, it concluded as follows:

> "So to my last farewell a charm is lent
> By Memory: for I seem to live again;
> Again among familiar friends to move;
> Again to spend the golden hours then spent;
> Yea, feel afresh each pleasure and each pain,
> Each circumstance of doubt and hope and love."

It happened, a few days after I had left, that I was obliged to go back to Eton, to recover some important papers which I had accidentally left behind; and I have never forgotten the desolation of the empty rooms and passages where, only a week before, all had been life and bustle. I hurried away, feeling like a ghost that revisits old haunts.

The school was ever in my thoughts: and during the interval of four years spent at the University I was constantly in touch with old friends at Eton, and a frequent visitor there. A fellow-undergraduate once said to me, half in remonstrance: "Why, I declare you're more concerned with any scrap of news from Eton than with all that happens at Cambridge." To which he

added, smiling : " And that's just how I feel myself." There were few of us who did *not* feel so ; and that is the proof that whatever virtues Eton may have lacked, she possessed that all-atoning one, " the genius to be loved."

THE END

NOTES ON ILLUSTRATIONS

As it is not possible to indicate beneath the photographs all who figure in the groups, it may be helpful here to name a few who are mentioned in the text or likely to have been known to readers.

In "Our Mess" (opposite page 36), the fag standing behind the centre of table, second from left, was Arthur Ryle, younger brother of the late Dean of Westminster. The picture, it will be observed, was not taken in an Eton room, but in a photographer's studio, where an unusually serious-looking party was furnished with an improvized tea-table.

"Collegers in 1871" (opposite page 58). In addition to Mr. H. E. Luxmoore, in centre, with A. A. Tilley and R. C. Radcliffe on his (own) right, and G. C. Macaulay on his left, this photograph includes—for readers who can identify them—the following, since known to fame. Among those standing at the back: A. Swan, Richmond Ritchie, J. E. C. Welldon, and George Macmillan. In back row of small boys sitting: W. O. Burrows, S. M. Burrows, Evelyn Ruggles-Brise, J. R. Harmer. H. E. Ryle is just behind A. A. Tilley. Sitting, on the stone parapet to right, J. H. J. Ellison. In the front row, second from left, Cecil Spring-Rice.

"Our Year" (opposite page 86). Names, from left to right: H. S. Salt, with E. Gould on slate; R. C. Radcliffe; F. Armitstead; A. A. Tilley; T. N. Carter; G. H. Armitstead, T. D. Chute; E. L. Hawkins.

"King's College, Cambridge" (opposite page 168). Front row, from right to left: third, F. H. Rawlins; fifth, A. G. Tindal, captain of the school in 1869. The Rev. Augustus Austen Leigh is standing at the extreme left of the second row. At the back, standing, against the centre of the chapel door, T. F. C. Huddleston; and on his right, the reader's left, C. T. Giles, the Harrow bowler of 1868.

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